The Dunera Internees

Benzion Patkin



Following the outbreak of World War II most European refugees in Britain were interned as enemy aliens. Most were, however, Jewish escapees from Hitler's Europe and only too willing to fight for the liberation of their native countries.

Despite this, many were dispatched to the colonies. Early in July 1940, 2542 internees were sent to Australia on the *Dunera*. On the voyage they were systematically robbed and beaten by their British guards, and kept in appalling and over-crowded conditions. That voyage of the 'Hell ship' – one passenger called it a 'pickpocket battleship' – is one of the most disgraceful, and least known blemishes on Britain's war record.

Nor does the story end there. The voyage led to a new exile. Internees were kept in Hay and Tatura Internment Camps. Some stayed there till 1945; others were released earlier and moved to Britain, USA or Eretz Israel.

In *The Dunera Internees* Benzion Patkin tells of the lives of these men: the initial internment, the voyage, the conditions at Hay and Tatura, and finally the actions he and others took to secure their release.

Drawing on interviews and written recollections, Benzion Patkin allows those who experienced the rigors of internment their own rich and varied testimony. The stories, recollections and anecdotes in *The Dunera Internees* speak of frustration, anger and humiliation. But they also tell of courage and of constructive work . . . the concerts and reviews (many of them highly acclaimed and with talented performers), the schools, the sporting activities and the religious organizations set up and maintained in the most inhospitable conditions.

The Dunera Internees is the record of a story that has been suppressed for too many years. But it is, above all, testimony to the courage and continuing enterprise of those individuals unfortunate enough to be caught up in a tangle of unfounded distrust and bureaucratic bungling.

18 illustrations

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2025

CASSELL AUSTRALIA LIMITED
31 Bridge Road Stanmore New South Wales
30 Curzon Street North Melbourne Victoria
In association with Cassell Limited, Auckland

Copyright © 1979 Benzion Patkin

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Cassell Australia Limited.

First published 1979
Set in 10/12 Times
Set and printed in Australia by
Star Printery, 21 Coulson St., Erskineville
F. 879

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing in Publication Data
Patkin, Benzion.
The Dunera internees.
Index
ISBN 0 7269 6803 x
1. Concentration camps — Australia.
2. World War, 1939-1945 — Australia —
Refugees. I. Title.
940.5472'94

The Dunera Internees

Benzion Patkin

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2025

Cassell Australia

The Dunera Internees

To

My wife, Hemda
son, Michael, and
daughter, Nehama
and their families

Contents

	Author's Note	ix
	Foreword	xi
	Introduction	xiii
Chapter 1	Jewish Refugees in England	1
Chapter 2	The Kitchener and Other Internment Camps	8
Chapter 3	The Hell-Ship *Dunera*	32
Chapter 4	Internment at Hay (1940-1)	63
Chapter 5	Internment at Tatura	112
Chapter 6	Involvement, Sequel, and Beyond	154
	Appendix	178
	Index	181

Author's Note

My sincere thanks to the Honourable Walter Jona, MP, then Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for the State of Victoria, and Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, OBE, for their generous words. I would also like to thank the following for their assistance: Mrs Porush, Sol Shifrin, Gwynn James, Carl Harrison-Ford, Hershl Bachrach, Dahlis May Thompson, Rose Kornan, Rex Patkin, Ian Rockman, Guy Anton Grodeck, Denis Barokas, Essia Nemenoff and Y. S. Cylich.

My primary debt, however, is to those 25 men who provided me with their reminiscences and memorabilia. Without their co-operation, it would not have been possible to produce this book: Hans Bachrach, Aaron Bar-Nir (Alfred Bruner), Boaz Bischofswerder, Rabbi Dr Elhanan Blumenthal, Heinz Bock, Pinhas Braun, Max Bruch, Erwin Frenkel, Kurt Fischer, Asher Joseph, Robert Kahn, James Leopold King (Leopold Kohn), Fr Walter Konig, SJ, Erwin Lamm, Elhanan Loebenstein, Klaus G. Loewald, Hans Joachim Margis, Bert Irwing Myer (Bim Meier), Israel Shiloni (Hans Hammerstein), Ernest Seaton (Ernst Zutrauen), Franz Stampfl, Manfred Stern (Armin Stern), Leo Tait (Tisch), Henry Talbot and Felix Werder (Bischofswerder).

Foreword

The Jewish community of Australia is indebted to Benzion Patkin for his life-long dedication to Jewish ideals and the welfare of the Jewish people. Education and Zionism have been his foremost interest, and in both fields he expounded his thoughts in deeds and in writing. This book deals with a sore episode in the life of a small segment of our people, but one which deserves to be recorded for future generations as a prototype of Jewish experience.

The 'minor' incident of the *Dunera* transportation of refugees from England to Australia took place at a time of carnage when human lives were measured in millions. Yet it was a unique incident, the story of which has a message for wider circles everywhere, especially in England and Australia, as well as a place in the annals of our people.

When the war conditions in England looked rather grim and an invasion of the island by Nazi forces was regarded a distinct possibility, the authorities at a moment of confusion and fear decided to send some 2500 refugees of foreign nationality, mostly Jews, to distant Australia as a safety measure.

This indiscriminate measure was particularly unfair and foolish in regard to the Jewish refugees, who had reason to hate the Nazis and to fear them more than anyone else.

But Mr Patkin does not confine himself to relating this story and its foibles and injustices in general terms. He displays, above all, deep sympathy with the fate of individual sufferers and their experiences, and thus this book is replete with moving stories and struggles of innocent, valuable and loyal individuals who were wantonly torn away from their families and transported through the hazards of fierce warfare at sea to a distant continent where, as the victims of renewed misunderstandings, and, indeed, cruel prejudices, they were kept behind barbed wire for many months with little help from outside. The story of their frustrations is vividly recorded in this book.

In the end fairness prevailed and freedom was granted most of these internees. As a result, the Australian Jewish Community, and Australia in general, were enriched by the settlement in their midst, mainly in Melbourne and Sydney, of about one thousand of these involuntary migrants. In the course of the years, they have proved a most valuable asset to the country and an impressive acquisition to

the Jewish Community. Some 150 migrated to Eretz Israel and others either returned to Britain or settled elsewhere.

Mr Patkin is to be commended on the extensive research he undertook and the numerous personal interviews he conducted in order to produce a well-documented work which is rich in humanity and kind-heartedness, and which represents an interesting chapter in the history of our community.

Walter Jona
Minister of Immigration and
Ethnic Affairs for the State of
Victoria

Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, OBE

1979

Introduction

One very hot Melbourne morning in early March 1941, I received a telephone call from Dr J. Leon Jona, then the President of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand. He asked to meet me at his surgery in Collins Street two days later, at midday. When I asked what he wished to discuss, he replied that he would tell me when we met.

Later the same day I saw Dr Shlomo Lowy, the Australian representative of the *Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel* (Jewish National Fund) World Directorate, a body whose function was to purchase land in Eretz Israel for Jewish settlement. He asked if Dr Jona had contacted me. I said he had and asked Dr Lowy what it was all about. I explained that I met Dr Jona several times a week but this was the first time he had refused to tell me the purpose of a meeting. I had even seen Dr Jona the night before and he didn't refer to anything urgent or mysterious.

At the Zionist Conference in Sydney a few months before, in 1940, I had refused the offer of the honorary secretaryship of the Zionist Federation Executive, and even a position on the Executive itself. This was because of the pressure of my other work for various Jewish organizations. Dr Jona knew this and sympathized with the reason for my decision. I was particularly interested in the work of *Magen David Adom*—the equivalent of Jewish Red Cross—in Australia, which seemed all the more urgent in view of the need for fund-raising to assist the Allied war effort in Eretz Israel. The person who took the honorary secretaryship volunteered for war service after the Conference, leaving a temporary gap in the Zionist movement's organization.

Knowing the situation, Dr Lowy told me that Dr Jona was urging the Zionist Federation Executive that night to invite me to take the position of honorary secretary. Also, Dr Lowy added, there were certain very important events which required immediate action.

I then accompanied Dr Lowy to the offices of the Federation in Rialto House, 497 Collins Street. The Jewish Welfare Society occupied part of the same suite, and its secretary-manager, Mr Goldsmith, assisted in the administration of Zionist Federation business as well. Also the two bodies shared an accountant, Mr Eugene Stanley. A part-time typist and stenographer handled Dr Lowy's correspondence and a letter or two for the Zionist Federation.

No wonder, then, that 'nearly everything is at a standstill', as Dr Lowy told me.

Dr Lowy led me into a back room where I saw something like a large ping-pong table with a mass of letters on it. There were so many envelopes, some opened, others unopened, that it was impossible to see the table top itself. The only other pieces of furniture in the room were two chairs. All the envelopes and the opened letters had censor's stamps on them, and return addresses of Internment Camps at Hay, NSW, or Tatura, Victoria, and a number beside the name of the sender.

I picked up one of the letters. It was written by a man of 32, born in Germany, an active Zionist since 16, requesting books for the study of Hebrew, and inquiring about his immigration certificate to Eretz Israel. It also complained that his three previous letters had been unanswered. These previous letters had been addressed to the Zionist Federation. Mr Goldsmith, the Secretary-Manager of the Jewish Welfare Society, entered the room as I was reading this letter. He asked me, 'How long do you think I am going to keep all these?' I replied that I knew nothing about these letters and asked if I could read some more. 'You can take the whole damn lot', he replied.

I filled the small case I was carrying with as many as would fit, to read at home that night and, before leaving the room, I read another half-dozen of these letters. The stories were all more or less the same. One of the letters spoke of the brutality of British military guards aboard the ship *Dunera* which, according to the writer, brought about 2500 internees from Britain to Australia, 90 per cent of them Jews.

Then it suddenly dawned on me that these letters were from Jews who had fled Nazism, found refuge in England where they hoped to obtain immigration certificates to Eretz Israel or other countries, and were instead declared 'enemy aliens' on the outbreak of World War II, and shipped to Australia for internment. I knew of the internment policy in England, but not that internees had been sent to Australia.

At home I kept reading. Before the war many of the letter-writers had been prominent in Zionist and other Jewish communal institutions. Before the Nazis came to power they had often been important civic officials and professionals—judges, engineers, professors, journalists, scientists and industrialists. The letters also revealed that after their arrival in Australia, the internees had tried to contact not only our organization but also the Advisory Boards of Sydney and Melbourne (*Yiddishe Gemeinde*, predecessors of the Jewish Boards of Deputies) and the various Australian Jewish Welfare Societies. But they had received next to nothing.

Many of the writers of these letters introduced themselves as members of Zionist organizations or *Keren Hayesod* (Jewish Foundation Fund) or *Keren Kayemeth*, in central European cities such as Frankfurt, Vienna, Hamburg, Breslau and Berlin. Many claimed to be holders of immigration certificates to Eretz Israel and expressed their earnest desire to go there at the earliest opportunity.

I was deeply moved by these letters and realized that the existence of these internees in Australia was the urgent matter which Dr Jona wished to discuss. I resolved immediately to accept the honorary secretaryship of the Zionist Federation if, at their meeting, they agreed to my being offered the job.

At 6 am next morning I drafted a cable to Moshe Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in Eretz Israel, acquainting him with the predicament of these hundreds of interned Jews in Australia. I asked him to authorize me, by cable, to act on behalf of the Jewish Agency in the matter, and to transfer to Australia the maximum feasible number of immigration certificates to Eretz Israel. I wrote the cable in Hebrew, knowing that M. D. Goldman, the chief wartime censor of cables in languages other than English, and a humane man, would do his utmost to transmit such a cable as quickly as possible.

I knew that the Jewish Agency had many immigration certificates valid for Eretz Israel which, if not used within a stipulated period, would be cancelled automatically. This was because none or very few Jews could leave Nazi-occupied Europe, nor was extensive *aliyah* (immigration) possible from other parts of the world because of the wartime restrictions on travel.

I even signed the cable as Honorary Secretary of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, knowing I would occupy the office some hours before Moshe Shertok would receive it. When I met Dr Jona he repeated what I already knew. It remained only for him to put his request in writing. This he did on 12 March 1941, and next day I replied.

I thanked the Zionist Federation Executive for bestowing such an honour upon me, and assured them I would do the utmost to justify their confidence in me. But prior to this letter of acceptance I had stipulated that Dr Jona promise me a free hand to act in all matters connected with the well-being and possible release for migration to Eretz Israel of the Jewish internees in Australian camps. Dr Jona gave this promise whole-heartedly.

I then set to work on a task which lasted many years and which enlisted the help of many Australians—secular, Christian and Jewish—but unfortunately by no means all representatives of Australian Jewry. The eventual release of these *Dunera* internees,

whether to settle in Australia, return to England, USA or other places, or for many their cherished dream of immigration to Eretz Israel ('The Land of Israel' in Hebrew), is the conclusion towards which I and many others worked.

This book gives the story of the *Dunera* refugee internees, their internment in England at the Kitchener and other camps, their awful voyage to Australia in July, August and September 1940, their internments at Hay and Tatura in Australia. It is told from the point of view of a group of ex-internees I regard as representative of the whole. Over the intervening years I have remained friendly with many of those whose letters I first read in that temporary room of the Zionist Federation in 1941. The people who largely make up this book have provided me with their reminiscences of the experience of internment, usually in written form. (In some cases I have added already published accounts, with permission.) I present the various episodes partly in my own words, but wherever possible in the words of internees themselves. Some naturally declined to give reminiscences; they are only too anxious to forget. One or two men died before they could complete their stories for this book. I have also been offered first hand testimonies since this book went into printing stages.

The account of the *Dunera* internees is authentic and, I believe, as authoritative as possible given inevitable restrictions upon the number of personal accounts which can be included in a book of this type, and given the inevitability of editorial, personal bias. My own beliefs are clear, and they are those of a Zionist who has worked for his cause in Australia for over 50 years. I am what I am, and I cannot change the facts.

Many aspects and periods of history, especially the history of oppressed groups, cannot be told because crucial documents have been either lost or suppressed, and because oral testimony is silenced by guilt or the unspeakable depths of humiliation. Even in the twentieth century, with some of the most tragic historical events apparently so fresh in memory, many episodes cannot be recorded or told fully.

The *Dunera* story is to some extent a case in point. Files of correspondence between the Zionist Federation and the inmates of the Hay and Tatura camps, for example, have been lost, as well as correspondence with the Jewish Agency Offices in England, New York and Jerusalem concerning their immigration to Eretz Israel. Official lists of the *Dunera* passengers are still closed by the Australian Government (indirectly) and directly by the British Government, on the grounds that their release would harm some people who are still alive. But these people suffered enough at the

time, and since then have proved themselves the firmest and most loyal friends of Britain and her allies, including Australia.

Journalistic accounts of the *Dunera* group, so far the only source of general knowledge of the story, have stressed the number of 'names' who were on that ship. But this is only one side of the story. In this book the experiences of ordinary men, young and old at the time, are told in their own words, and no attempt has been made to trace their subsequent lives and careers—illustrious or otherwise—in detail. Moreover, the full story of the 8th Employment Company of the Australian Military Forces, which many of the *Dunera* men joined, is not dealt with at great length. That is the story for another book. This book, rather, tells the story of a series of unhappy episodes in Allied war administration of refugees, episodes which should not have occurred. At times the methods used approximated early Nazi methods of concentration camps and arbitrary deportation.

Who, then, were these refugees and how did they happen to come to Australia? And what were the material and spiritual dimensions of their experience? The answer will be found in the text of this book, and in the chapter 'Sequel, Involvement, and Beyond'.

CHAPTER 1

Jewish Refugees in England

The Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933. Five years later they occupied Austria, and in March 1939 they overran Czechoslovakia. Wherever Hitler came to power or occupied territories the Jews were his first target for liquidation or expulsion. As a result many German Jews, whose families had lived in Germany for centuries, began a mass exodus to any country that would grant them entry permits. The German Jews were followed by Jews from Austria, Czechoslovakia, and other countries in Central Europe.

The greatest number of Jewish refugees from Europe in the years 1933-43 settled in the USA (190 000), Eretz Israel (120 000), and England (80 000). Unfortunately, with the outbreak of Arab riots in 1936 (instigated by the Mufti of Jerusalem and assisted by Hitler and Mussolini), the British Administration appeased Arab extremist opinion by considerable reductions in the number of immigration certificates for Jewish refugees. As a consequence the number of Jews who could leave Germany and other Nazi-occupied territories declined.

Many Jews to whom certificates had been allocated or promised were compelled to wait until the next quota of such certificates was released by the British Administration. The number of applicants grew while the number of certificates for immigration to other countries shrank. Most pathetic were the cases of Jews who were interned by the Germans in concentration camps like Buchenwald. Their release was dependent upon an immigration visa to Eretz Israel, Argentina, England or elsewhere.

Kurt Fischer 'I was still in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. To obtain my release I had to sign a declaration that my family and I would leave Germany immediately. Although I was a member of the Breslau Zionist Organization, I could not get a certificate to enter Eretz Israel because there were none available at the time. I tried to join an illegal transport to Eretz Israel but because the Gestapo had confiscated all my possessions and money, I was unable to pay for it.'

Fischer's uncle, Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck, was friendly with Gerald Rufus Isaacs, the second Marquis of Reading, who was chairman of the Council for German Jewry. Through this friendship Kurt Fischer received a permit to enter England. With one hundred other refugees, Fischer left Berlin by train on 24 August 1939 and travelled to England by way of Belgium. On arrival in Cologne the Jewish community gave them a farewell dinner which took his mind back to 1915 when, as a reserve artilleryman, he had passed through the city on the way to the Western Front. Then they were given a good dinner and many fine speeches were made in their honour. This time, however, the circumstances were utterly different. The main impression at Aachen, on the German-Belgian border, was relief at the last sight of the German police:

'Many of them were SS guards who could return anyone, or indeed all of us, to Germany and to the concentration camp. We were all questioned by an SS man and a Customs officer as to the amount of money each of us had because, according to the law, no one was allowed to take more than ten marks out of Germany. Two people were taken out of each compartment for further questioning and searches. I was one of the two taken from our compartment. Looking through my hand luggage, the SS man found an English text-book. He asked me whether I thought England was more beautiful than Germany. I answered that I had never been to England and therefore could not express an opinion. He was apparently satisfied with my answer because he passed me on to the Customs officer for a body search. It is impossible to describe the feeling of joy when, after entering Belgium via Herstal, we saw Belgian officers without swastikas on their uniforms, and no more swastikas on flags or on buildings. We felt freedom for the first time in years.'

On arrival at Ostend, the refugees changed their German marks into British money, made a short sight-seeing tour of the city, and boarded the channel steamer which took them to England. They regarded England as a transit point, whence another steamer would eventually take them to their final destination—Eretz Israel.

Kurt Fischer 'Two of my younger brothers were already in England and, as a scientist, I was confident I would have no trouble in finding suitable work there. Knowing the English language, it was a pleasure to hear the calm and polite English Customs officer "Have you any cigarettes?" "No." "Thank you". No jackboots and no screeching commands. We felt that life had once again assumed meaning and promise. Without wasting any time, I applied to the Home Office for permits for my wife and children to come to England to join me. I

wrote to my wife in Germany telling her about the application, not realizing that our transport of a hundred refugees would be the last to leave Germany.'

The story related by Heinz Bock could have been told by thousands of other German Jews. His family differed from other German families only by its 'Mosaic persuasion'. All the past generations had been proud German soldiers and had fought alongside Germans of all other religions for the honour of the fatherland. His father had been a member of the *Militärverein Deutsches Vaterland* (German Fatherland Military Association). His older brother had volunteered for the army in 1914 and an uncle was killed at the front soon after.

Heinz Bock recalled that, together with the other boys at the Jewish Community School in Berlin, he had been proud to hear the headmaster speak of German victories and to be told that it was a national duty to persuade parents to subscribe to War Loans. A postcard sent by his father to the elder brother in 1914 was inscribed 'My heart is filled with pride knowing that you are guarding the honour of the Fatherland. But I am worried by the thought that one of your bullets may hit a Jew in the enemy camp.'

Heinz Bock 'No doubt my father's thoughts reflected accurately the uncertainty of our situation. My younger brother was a member of the Zionist Organisation, and in addition to the *Berliner Tageblatt* we subscribed to many of the Jewish newspapers and periodicals published in Germany. As a boy I was a member of the German-Jewish Youth Association (*Kameraden*, Friends) and loved to go on excursions to feel the great joy of seeing our native Germany. During the High Holidays our business was closed and I felt happy in the atmosphere in which I was growing up, an atmosphere which in every way united us with our German homeland, and saw no reason to leave it. Eretz Israel was perhaps a good solution for the East European Jews, victims of anti-Semitism who were being driven out as refugees. Jewish circles in Germany generally believed that pogroms which were the order of the day in Poland and Russia could not occur in a civilized German community. Anti-Semitism did exist in Germany . . . but this was regarded as exceptional . . . Germany was a nation of poets and thinkers, and we were ready to help those persecuted and suffering people from the East, who could not become assimilated in Germany, so that they could settle in a home to be created in Eretz Israel.'

It was therefore strange for the young Heinz Bock to comprehend that although he and his family were in every way closely bound to their German homeland, they read in the *Juedische Rundshau* that

moves were being made to build a home for the Jews in Eretz Israel, and that young people were settling there. The idea was strange to him and many others because they considered themselves German nationals; they loved Germany. He was to realize all too soon the tragedy of the German Jews. They falsely believed that their fellow-Germans did not see in them anything but Germans like themselves, except for their religious convictions. Unfortunately history had not taught the German Jew, or many other Jews for that matter, that wherever he might be he would always be regarded 'a Jew'. He could be a German Jew, a Dutch Jew, a Russian Jew or an English Jew, but he could not be a Jewish Englishman, a Jewish Russian, a Jewish Dutchman or a Jewish German.

Little did Heinz Bock dream that only a few years after Germany was defeated in World War I 'voices would be heard that the Jews were the cause of all the country's misfortune, such as inflation and unemployment'. Governments were ineffective and short-lived and among the new parties formed there was one calling itself 'National' and 'Socialist', which grew alarmingly.

The fact that the new National Socialist party regarded the Jews as the main enemy of Germany did not worry most ordinary German citizens. They were willing to give it a chance to bring them salvation. When the National Socialist party came to power, a radio broadcast announced that Jews in Germany were packing their bags and leaving the country.

Heinz Bock recalls that, on hearing the broadcast, his mother slammed her hand on the table and declared: 'We shall show them, we are staying here'. To prove their determination the family opened another furniture store in Berlin in 1935, despite anti-Jewish laws which had already been proclaimed.

A Jewish doctor who lived with the Bocks and had only recently begun to practise was losing patients and the Health Insurance Service deregistered him. He therefore decided to emigrate to Eretz Israel. When he announced his decision to Mrs Bock she cried bitterly, but the doctor told her not to cry for those who were leaving Germany, but for those who were staying.

The Bocks were like many other 'good' German-Jewish families: they stayed and refused to move. They witnessed the deportation of Polish Jews from Germany back to Poland, only to find the Polish authorities refusing to allow them entry at the border. The Bocks could only guess what happened to these Polish Jews. At last the reality of the situation compelled the Bocks to change their attitude. The 'land of poets and thinkers' was no more. They began to look elsewhere for a new home.

At the time of the liquidation of commercial and industrial enterprises owned by Jews and the seizure of Jewish-owned property in November 1938, Heinz Bock was sent to a concentration camp. This occurred less than a year after his marriage. On arrival at the camp an SS man asked him, 'Our Fuhrer has been saying since 1933 that Jews should leave Germany, why are you still here?' Only much later did Heinz Bock realize the meaning of these words. He saw from seven weeks in the camp the extent of Nazi cruelty and this forced him to break his sentimental ties with Germany.

Since Eretz Israel was far from their minds, and since the limited number of certificates were allocated first of all to those who were previously associated with the Zionist Movement, the Bocks listened to the suggestion of friends that they should go to Shanghai. Passages were actually booked for the whole family, including Heinz, but when they read urgent announcements in the Jewish-German journal *Judishes Gemeindeblatt* that 'Shanghai is hell' and 'Don't go to Shanghai', the bookings were cancelled.

Whilst waiting for an opportunity to emigrate elsewhere, the whole family was arrested and deported to a location from where there was no way out except to an extermination camp. 'Thus', Heinz recalled, 'the fate of my entire family was sealed. My wife, my mother, my two brothers, their wives, my sister and her husband—they all perished.'

Heinz himself, surprisingly and perhaps miraculously, was released from the concentration camp by the Gestapo. He was told that he must emigrate and, after many tribulations, he arrived in England: 'I was moved to tears when I, and the others, were told to try and forget what happened to us (will we ever?) as we were now free people amongst all other free people and in a free land'. He soon found himself in the company of thousands of other refugees, in the Kitchener Camp. A few days later, World War II broke out.

Another figure in this story was Alfred Bruner. The first miracle in his life was his escape from Austria to England, via Germany and Holland with 260 other children aged between five and sixteen. It was one of the last transports to escape the Nazis.

His parents were left in Austria. Would any of them come out? Which of the children would be lucky and see his or her papa and mama again? The night of 9 November 1938 (*Kristal Nacht*) was a sign and an example of what could happen to them. Alfred Bruner was not yet 16 years old when he was saved.

At first the refugees were welcomed in England. They were being absorbed all over the country. But as war progressed, the cordiality towards them became restrained. The authorities became suspicious. Maybe spies are amongst the refugees? Because of his age, Alfred

Bruner was considered harmless and not classified at all. His family was very orthodox-religious, so on arrival in England, together with other boys like himself, he was sent to a *Yeshivah* (Talmudic College) in Gateshead, North England. Soon afterwards his father escaped from Austria and made his home in Manchester.

Meanwhile the war came to England as the terrible indiscriminate bombing of English cities, towns and villages began. Some of the British authorities became panicky and decided to intern all the refugees from Central Europe, even if they were innocent, just in case one might be a spy. Alfred Bruner was amongst those finally interned.

Britain was short of food, and it was awkward to have within her borders thousands of internees who had to be fed while they were also considered as possible security risks. For these reasons it was decided to transport them overseas, to Canada and Australia. The authorities called for volunteers to migrate to countries overseas. Alfred Bruner was among the first to volunteer in his area. Thus he found himself eventually on the *Dunera*.

Robert Kahn was another young boy like Alfred Bruner. Like thousands of German-Jewish children of his age, he was separated from his parents who urged him to leave Germany to save himself. His father, a proud member of the Bavarian Judiciary—first as Public Prosecutor and later as County Court Judge—had served in World War I and was tolerated by the Nazis until as late as 1935. He refused to leave what he thought to be his Fatherland, hoping he would continue to receive his pension. When, two years later, he realized that he and his family must leave Germany to save themselves, it was too late to obtain entry permits to other countries they wished to reach. They remained in Germany and both parents ended their lives in the gas chambers of Auschwitz in 1943.

Robert Kahn, their only child, having been on the waiting list for a visa to the United States, was able to obtain a transit visa to England in May 1939, with the help of Rabbi and Mrs I. Porush, through the 'Save the Children' scheme of the B'Nai B'Rith. He left Nazi Germany in one of the special 'children's transports' organized after the horrors of *Kristal Nacht*.

Robert Kahn 'On arrival in England, the girls were placed with Jewish families, but the boys, including myself, were sent to refugee hostels, specially set up for this purpose. There I began to become acquainted with the English language but was not allowed to get a job until later, when the war was already months in progress. The job, however, did not last very long because Northampton, where the tannery in which I worked was situated, had been declared a

'protected area' following the arrival of Canadian and Belgian troops evacuated from Dunkirk. Because technically I was an 'enemy alien', I was compelled to return to London. Whilst I waited to start another job in London, I was arrested by an officer from Scotland Yard who told me: "Don't worry, it will only take a few days". He was right because eight days later I was taken aboard the *Dunera*.'

CHAPTER 2

The Kitchener and Other Internment Camps

The Kitchener Camp was so-called because it was built soon after the outbreak of World War I, to accommodate newly recruited British soldiers, and was operative when Lord Herbert Kitchener was Secretary of War.

Following the Nazis' advent to power in 1933, when streams of Jews began to leave Germany, England was one of the few countries the masses of refugees were allowed to enter on a temporary basis—or in certain cases as immigrants.

The Kitchener Camp was then transformed into something like a transit camp for refugees who were accommodated there until they obtained visas to enter Eretz Israel, USA or any other country, or obtained work and subsequently accommodation in the United Kingdom. In September 1939 the population of Kitchener Camp was over 3000. But there were also other camps similar to Kitchener. The inmates of the *Dunera* included refugees from nearly every camp in the United Kingdom.

The last group of refugees to come out of Germany had hardly settled in the Kitchener Camp before World War II broke out, and Hell broke loose. Germany occupied the western half of Poland and, according to the 'Friendship Treaty' with the Soviet Union, the latter occupied the eastern half of Poland and later the Baltic countries. Shortly afterwards, Germany invaded and occupied Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway and France. The existence of millions, and the freedom of all Europe was at stake.

One of the first acts of the British Government was to declare all inmates of the Kitchener Camp enemy aliens, although they were all refugees from Nazi Germany or territories in Central Europe occupied by the Nazis. Moreover, all further immigration of refugees from Europe into England was stopped indefinitely. The withdrawal of immigration permits prevented thousands of German and other Central European Jews from leaving Nazi-occupied territories by way of neutral Belgium or Holland, where the refugees could have found temporary residence in transit to other destinations.

But miracles can happen. One morning, to the utter surprise of the internees, it was announced that about a hundred women and children were expected to arrive from Germany later in the day. More than a thousand pairs of eyes were peering into nowhere, trying to stare over the horizon, hoping to see their wives and children. At last the transport arrived. Families who were reunited were ecstatic. The disappointed were broken-hearted.

Life must go on, however. Rooms and beds had to be made available. All tried their best to make the new arrivals as comfortable as camp facilities would allow. Hans Hammerstein recalls that he was ordered to organize the teaching of about thirty children of various age groups, without any guidance, and without text-books or any other aids. Yet Hammerstein succeeded because he was sincere in his endeavours, original in his approach, and very conscious of his responsibility to help others achieve their best.

He acquired the assistance of a former teacher, Mr Wolf Neier, who improvised desks by cutting some wooden boards which the children put across their knees, whilst the teacher sat on suitcases or on the floor. On the following day, Hammerstein and Neier visited the county school in Sandwich where the headmistress, once aware of their plight, gave them as many text-books as they could carry. Moreover, they were invited to attend the weekly staff meetings and to participate in discussions on literature, music, and other syllabus subjects. 'How strange', remarked Hammerstein at one such gathering following a lecture on Bach and Mozart, 'the German planes up there are dropping bombs to kill us and we down here are discussing German music.' The English headmistress answered, 'This proves that we are different.'

Although many of the internees at the Kitchener Camp came from the same environment and had the same background as Hans Hammerstein, it was he who proved in due course to be a natural leader. He had been born in Berlin in 1901. His parents and grandparents, who called themselves 'Germans of Mosaic persuasion' were highly assimilated German Jews. 'They knew nothing of Judaism', Hans wrote, 'and did not like it either. Yet anti-Semitism was not far from the atmosphere in which I grew up as the youngest of four children.'

Hans Hammerstein 'My own children, who are now in Israel, are, in fact, the only Jews in our family of their generation, whilst I have eight Christian cousins in Germany. My family were great German patriots. My brothers and my sister served in the German Army during World War I, and I stayed home with mother, living in fear lest the war would end before I was old enough to be a soldier. But the

war ended and I joined an ill-famed "Volunteer Corps" in 1919 with which I stayed for some months. Curiously enough, it was precisely there that I heard about Eretz Israel (or Palestine) for the first time, whilst attending ideological instruction by reactionary and anti-Semitic orators.

'A few months after I left the Corps, I joined the Jewish Youth Movement *Blau-Weiss* which resembled, to a certain extent, the German Scouts Organization. The *Blau-Weiss* invoked in me the desire to study, and due to the general atmosphere prevailing in the rooms of the organization or the homes of its members, the standard of learning was high and knowledge gained added more passion to go deeper in my studies. After matriculation at High School, I entered University; I wanted to become a teacher, and I thought this would be useful in Eretz Israel. At the University, as at the *Blau-Weiss*, I had the opportunity to meet Jewish Youth from the "East" (Ost-Juden)—from Poland and Lithuania. It was then that I began to understand the way of life of the East European Jews and the importance of the Yiddish and Hebrew languages.'

Hammerstein then interrupted his studies and moved to Kovno, in Lithuania. There he joined the *Hashomer Hatzayir* (Young Watchman) Zionist Movement and decided to learn carpentry for future pioneering life in Eretz Israel. Hammerstein went there at the end of 1926 but returned to Germany in 1928 to complete his studies at the University of Berlin where he finally obtained a teacher's degree. From his first position as a teacher, Hammerstein proved to be the right person to carry out the task. It was not long before he became headmaster of the Jewish School at Bonn and developed it to the highest possible standard.

With the advance of Nazi power in Germany, it became intolerable for Jewish children to attend German schools. (They were told to undress in the classroom for the teacher to 'explain' to the other pupils how different various parts of the bodies of Jews are from those of 'true Aryans'.) Jewish communities had to establish their own day schools to enable their children to continue their education. New teachers had to be trained in the shortest possible time, with much consideration given to new methods in general and Jewish education in particular. Hans Hammerstein had to produce Jewish teachers at newly established Teachers' Seminaries. In addition, he had to address teachers' conventions and communal organizations, and invent tactics to overcome the unusual difficulties caused by unprecedented anti-Jewish persecutions.

'As a result of Nazi persecutions', he writes, 'the renaissance of Jewish consciousness and the newly-felt inner urge for Jewish

education, whether for children or adults, gave the Jewish teachers the impetus to fulfil their great historical task with such devotion and enthusiasm that everything transmitted to the students was eagerly absorbed.'

In 1937 Hammerstein was invited to take up the position of headmaster at a large school in Stettin. There he also continued his other activities, giving particular attention to the Zionist organization of which he was chairman until the night of 9 November 1938, when a real pogrom on everything Jewish was organized by the Nazis to avenge the assassination by Hershel Grynszpan of Ernst Von Rath, third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris.

The assassination was retaliation against the deportation by Germany of thousands of Jewish families to the Polish-German border in spite of Poland's refusal to accept them. Amongst the deportees were Hershell Grynszpan's parents. The assassination was planned by him against the German Ambassador, in order to attract world attention to the plight of German and Austrian Jews. But the shot mistakenly hit the third secretary who was fatally wounded, and died two days later.

Appeals were made to the British Government to use its influence with the German Government to suspend any imminent retaliation against German Jewry, but the British refused to become involved. Thus on the night of 9-10 November 1938 a well-organized pogrom took place throughout Germany and Austria. It is known as *Kristal Nacht* because of the smashed windows. Nearly a thousand Jewish shops and warehouses, two hundred dwellings and three hundred synagogues were pillaged, set on fire and destroyed. About 30 000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps at Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Dachau. Amongst those arrested was Hans Hammerstein who, together with some fifty other inmates, was released on 11 January 1939.

Hans Hammerstein 'We were standing before the KZ [*Konzentrazions Zenter*, Concentration Camp] Commandant wearing striped convicts' garments, our heads close-cropped to near baldness and, after spending sixty days in this inferno, hearing, yet not hearing: "Don't think you are released because your bill is settled. The contrary is the case. We give you 'leave' so that you can pack up and clear out of Germany. If not, we will take you in here again." But how could we leave Germany without proof that some other country would let us in? What about our wives and children? The many "good" countries, so proud of their respect for human rights, had closed their doors to German-Jewish refugees.

'However, there was a tiny light over the horizon. England would take more German-Jewish refugees, but only "transit"—so long as they had a visa to go somewhere else later. Our wives urged us to go. The Nazis, they said, would kill the men but they would not touch the women and children. Also, from the refugee camps in England, we might be able to obtain entry permits elsewhere, for them, for the children and for ourselves.'

So yet another group left Germany, to follow the now well-beaten track through Belgium or Holland and then by steamer to Dover, whence they were taken to the Kitchener Camp, to join over 3 000 other inmates. Hans Hammerstein was with this group which travelled from Germany to England.

Naturally, the inmates at the Kitchener Camp were depressed because they could do nothing to help their families left in Central Europe. At the same time, severe restrictions were imposed on their movements at the camp, as well as on more than 70 000 others of German or Austrian origin then living in Britain, although some of them had lived there for twenty or thirty years. The British Government knew that the majority of these people were victims of the Nazis, whilst a minority probably had to be investigated. To deal with the situation, the Government set up tribunals to screen all those who had come from Germany and Austria, irrespective of the date of their arrival.

They were divided into three categories. 'A' category comprised those about whom there were 'serious doubts'; they numbered about 600 and were interned. 'I was an "A" case', said Erwin Frenkel. 'I had several letters of recommendation from London Rabbis and Cantors. That shows you how meaningful these classifications were. Most of the people I met in camp were either Jews or communists, until the arrival of some captured German merchant seamen from the *Adolf Wehrman*, a German ship sunk by the allies.'

'B' category, numbering about 7 000, were restricted in their freedom of movement. 'C' category, numbering about 67 000, were given complete freedom. An additional group of approximately 55 000 was classified as 'refugees from Nazi oppression'. Most of the aliens classified by the 120 tribunals operating in Britain were Jews. Criticism of various tribunals' decisions grew in intensity, as some well-known anti-Nazis were included in 'A' and 'B' categories. Following numerous protests, a review of the classifications was ordered by the Home Office, but this did not begin until May 1940.

People like Kurt Fischer, Heinz Bock, Hans Hammerstein, Dr Hermann Maschke and Leonhard Levin were included in the category of 'refugees from Nazi oppression'. They were allowed to register at the employment office in Sandwich, a town near the camp.

Hans Hammerstein 'Because the inmates of the Kitchener Camp were nearly all Jews, one would rightly have expected some kind of "united Jewish spirit" to develop amongst the thousands of refugees, to enable them to comfort each other and ease the burden of common misery. But the contrary was the case. It started with the camp authorities, who did not call it a "Jewish refugee camp" but a "camp for refugees from Nazi oppression". True, there were a dozen or so non-Jews and some baptised Jews, but their fate under the Nazis was the same as that of Jews who were not baptised. The animosity between different groups and sects was also strong and made the situation irritable and offensive. Amongst the several distinguished visitors to the Camp was the Archbishop of Canterbury who said, in the course of his address: "You Germans are in my eyes very good people. I have studied in your country and I love it. I deplore the bad happenings there and believe they will stop at some future time".'

Meanwhile some of the refugees received their luggage, which had been despatched from their homes prior to their departure from Germany. Since their visas were specifically made out for Kitchener Camp, they began settling down for an extended stay there. A number of employment opportunities became available in the camp itself, but people like Kurt Fischer, who were anxious to proceed to Eretz Israel, decided to do something that would give them experience, however little, in agriculture. They tilled the soil and sowed or planted anything they could obtain. They also cleared the mud and weeds which clogged the creek that ran through the camp and later found work harvesting potatoes on a nearby property. Many other inmates at the Kitchener Camp joined the Defence Corps and took part in various kinds of air defence exercises. They also filled hundreds of thousands of sandbags for the protection of churches, town halls and schools in neighbouring towns and villages.

The camp inmates included experienced teachers of Hebrew language and literature, graduates of Talmudic and Rabbinical seminaries, doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists and other professionals. Various groups were organized for 'refresher' studies in subjects such as philosophy, languages, science and music. Hebrew studies, including Jewish history, the development of Eretz Israel, and lectures on Jewish education and on specific 'Jewish problems', became the responsibility of Hans Hammerstein.

Hammerstein also became the unofficial leader of the Zionist group, numbering about 2 000 inmates. Officially such a group did not exist because the Director of the camp would not permit the formation of what he called 'political parties'. Unofficially, however, all Zionist and Hebrew educational activities were carried out by

Hammerstein with the assistance of devoted friends like Neier, Lomas, Wieder, Kaplan and Tenenhaus under the name of 'the circle of friends of Eretz Israel' within the so-called 'Camp University'. At the same time, special attention was given to the intensive study of the English language which was to be of great benefit to all the refugees in later years.

Hans Hammerstein 'We had endeavoured to form in the Kitchener Camp a proper Zionist organization. The idea was to organize a group on the principles of the Zionist movement which existed in Germany. This meant, to have cultural, social and educational activities, particularly with regard to the study of the Hebrew language. We had good teachers; one of them, Wolf Neier from Berlin spared no effort in the successful development of the group. Another friend dedicated to the same cause was Wieder for whom the Zionist ideal was more than part of his life. But no co-operation or any encouragement to the Zionist group was extended by the camp directorate. The latter's animosity to Zionism was particularly evident when we decided to hold a Theodor Herzl commemorative function. Although the camp Director knew about the life and activities of the founder of political Zionism and of the Zionist organization, he nevertheless requested us to submit to him special information about Herzl, only to show that he, the Director, had the power to issue permits or to refuse permits to hold functions at the camp.

'Notwithstanding all the difficulties we had to overcome whilst in the camp in England, our frustrations as a result of the negative attitude to our aspirations to go to Eretz Israel, by many of the Zionist leaders, our faith in Zionism never wavered. Our applications for certificates to enter Eretz Israel made to the World Executive of the Zionist Organization, situated at that time in London, were refused. It was a big blow to us because without such certificates we had no possibility to get our families out of Germany. Their appalling answer was that they (the Executive of the World Zionist Organization) had never heard about us, had never promised us any certificates, and could make no promises now.

'Later we had the opportunity to meet Martin Rosenblueth[1] who heard our complaint but reaffirmed the inability of the World Zionist Executive to do anything for us as the British Government, at the time, was opposed to any Jewish migration to Eretz Israel. We were

1 Hammerstein may be referring to Felix Rosenblueth, who later changed his name to Rosen. He was a member of the World Zionist Organization Executive and, after the establishment of the State of Israel, served as Minister of Justice for a number of years. He was also leader of the Liberal Party in Israel.

also visited by Professor Norman Bentwich[2] who came specially to address the Zionist group at the camp. He spoke earnestly and truthfully, describing our situation with regard to immigration certificates as most hopeless and thus dispelled all our illusionary thoughts. When World War II broke out, we were also visited by Moshe Shertok (later Moshe Sharet, the first Minister for Foreign Affairs in the first Israeli Government) and Professor Zelig Brodetzky. Both spoke about the immediate necessity to establish a Jewish Legion, to fight the Germans, side by side with the British, French and other Allied Forces. But the British Government at that time was bitterly opposed to the idea to form a Jewish fighting army or even a single brigade.'

Before the end of 1939 the British Broadcasting Corporation established a monitoring station near the camp. About twelve of the camp inmates who had the necessary knowledge of other languages found employment there. They worked alternate shifts to enable the station to remain open around the clock.

A number of inmates had immigration visas to the United States, South American countries or Eretz Israel, but only holders of the South and North American entry visas were able to depart, notwithstanding the dangers of being torpedoed in the Atlantic. Those who held immigration certificates to Eretz Israel could not leave England: they were told no shipping was available to the Middle East.

There was a pleasant surprise for some inmates at the Kitchener Camp, when they began to receive letters from their wives or members of their families who were still in Germany. The recipients of such mail were those who had friends or relatives in neutral countries such as Belgium and Holland, to whom letters were sent from Germany; they in turn mailed them to England. The contact was indirect, and infrequent, and did not last long.

The Marquis of Reading visited the camp in March 1940. As was usual on such occasions, all inmates were requested to assemble in the big hall to hear the distinguished visitor's announcements. The Marquis informed them that due to the war situation there was little, if any, opportunity for re-emigration to any country overseas or for employment in England. He recommended that the inmates at the camp should volunteer for service in the Pioneer Corps, a section of the British Army specializing in ordnance work which entailed

2 Norman Bentwich was Attorney General of the Mandate Government in Eretz Israel from 1920 to 1931. He was Professor of International Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem from 1931 to 1951 and Director of the League of Nations Commission for Jewish Refugees from Germany 1933 to 1936.

neither combat duties nor bearing arms. This corps was mainly engaged in auxiliary duties, such as loading and unloading munitions, cleaning military camps, and moving war materials as required. Under the leadership of Hans Hammerstein the Zionists at the camp presented the British authorities with a list of names of inmates who wished to volunteer for service in a Jewish unit, like the Jewish Legion in World War I. The application was refused.

About five hundred inmates, mainly bachelors or men whose wives and families were in England or elsewhere, joined the Pioneer Corps almost immediately. Very few of the inmates whose wives and children were still in Germany volunteered. They reasoned that should the Germans learn of such action, their families would be liable to victimization. Little did the refugees know or imagine that nearly all would be exterminated in the gas chambers irrespective of what they did.

Hans Hammerstein 'The camp was a magnanimous and grand contribution to the solution of the refugee problem. It could accommodate about 3500 men, and I am sure that very large sums of money were collected in England, America and elsewhere to feed, clothe and house us. I wonder if we realized this at the time and were grateful for it. Nor do I know if any of us had previously ever done enough for our Jewish brethren anywhere.'

The inmates accepted the authority of the camp administration. They repaired dilapidated huts and roads, guarded the camp at nights, worked in the kitchens and offices, and engaged in teaching, nursing and many other occupations. The camp grew to the size of a town. It even had a 'Migration Department' which some inmates hoped would help them. Others did not rely on it. They turned to any conceivable person or institution, Jewish and non-Jewish, hoping that wives might be employed as domestics in England and thus prove themselves worthy of visas for the whole family to Eretz Israel.

Hans Hammerstein 'We Zionists were more naive than others in the matter. Yet, whilst waiting for our Eretz Israel certificates, we studied Hebrew and the geography of our old-new homeland. The others laughed at us, calling us fools. Were they right or were we crazy?

'But our so-called "Zionist craziness" was not limited to "normal Zionist" cultural activities. One day I found a Keren Kayemeth blue box (a tin money-box for donations to land reclamation projects in Eretz Israel) and I went with it in my hand from hut to hut asking the camp inmates to put a coin into it. Nobody had any income except for

the weekly sixpence pocket money and a postage stamp for a letter overseas. I calculated as follows: twelve pennies make one shilling and 240 weekly pennies make one pound. Most people thought I was crazy or joking. But I told them, since one penny has four farthings and nothing could be bought for the farthing which is only a 960th part of a pound, why not give them to the Keren Kayemeth? Some men agreed to donate halfpennies and farthings. And so I continued to visit the huts in the evenings, in the blackout, walking in the mud, irrespective of whether it was raining or not. After many weeks I collected three pounds and proudly wrote about my success to the Keren Kayemeth people in London. They passed my letter to the Zionist Federation in England which published it in the *Zionist Review*. It was then reprinted in the *Karnenu*, the Keren Kayemeth monthly in Jerusalem. Following a few more collections, I decided to transmit the money to the London office of the Keren Kayemeth for transfer to Jerusalem. But I refused to waste any of the precious collection on postage stamps and gave the whole amount to a man who was to be in London the following day, and would deliver it personally. It was never delivered! We became famous but the Keren Kayemeth never received the money.'

A heavy blow fell on the Kitchener Camp inmates in February 1940, when they heard a radio report about the deportation to Lublin in Poland of all men, women and children of the Stettin Jewish community. The families of Hans Hammerstein and others lived in Stettin. Knowing that a substantial number of Jews from Stettin lived in and around London, and as permits for travel within England were not yet required, Hammerstein went there and organized a meeting of Stettin Jews for action to save their families. They called on the consuls of all neutral countries and on numerous organizations begging them to help, but their pleas were ineffective. 'The giant city swallowed my time', recalled Hammerstein, 'by endless unsuccessful walks and delays. I felt small and useless. Crossing Hyde Park I noticed a small number of people listening to a speaker. When I came nearer I saw that the speaker was wearing a black shirt, so I understood he was a Fascist orator. He maintained that Hitler was not his enemy; his enemies were here in England.'

On 10 May 1940, the Nazis poured into Belgium, Holland and Denmark. They had decided on total conquest. The impact was immediately felt throughout England and especially in the refugee camps.

Kurt Fischer 'I saw three young soldiers building what finally became a machine gun nest in the camp . . . a few days later, as I was

trying to leave for my early morning shift at the Monitoring Station of the BBC, I was stopped by a friend from camp who told me in a most excited manner that the camp was surrounded by armed soldiers and no one was permitted to leave . . . as it turned out, we were now regarded as internees, and we began to realize what the Marquis of Reading had meant when he told us on his last visit to the camp, that the inmates who would not join the Pioneer Corps would also be looked after.'

As the German tanks raced to the English Channel and the North Sea coasts, Winston Churchill became Prime Minister and the most important decision in the this refugee story was then made by the British Government: all male German and Austrian citizens aged between 16 and 60, living in the 'coastal' areas were interned. This was followed by the internment of German and Austrian citizens previously classified as belonging to 'B' category. Internment also included women of the same age-group as men. By mid-July, 20 000 men of German and Austrian birth were rounded up. Only a few thousand remained at liberty in England.

Erwin Frenkel 'Since I was classified by the Special Tribunal as belonging to category "A", I was taken direct to Piccadilly Circus Police Station. About two hours later I was transferred to the Chelsea transition centre, from which I was transferred, together with many others, to "Warner's Holiday Camp", situated in Seaton, Devonshire, which had been converted into an internment camp.

'It was surrounded by barbed wire but, except for two roll calls daily, there was no restriction on liberty inside the camp. We were given the opportunity to earn some pocket money by making fishermen's nets. The camp inmates elected their own camp-leader and organized their own manifold activities. The leader of the camp was a Mr Franz Eichenberg, a baptised Jew, who proved to be a useful spokesman. He was a lawyer by profession, a hobby mathematician and very witty. Eichenberg had Jewish relatives in Melbourne, and, although they were not baptized, all of them could be described as belonging to the category characterized as "Germany's Step-children". They had no sense of Jewish identity until it was inflicted on them by external pressure, which they deeply resented.'

In addition to Jews and baptised Jews, the camp at Seaton contained anti-Nazi Germans of all shades, including German Communists, plus a few Germans who were Nazi sympathizers. However, following the sinking of the German merchant ship *Adolf Wehrman*, there was an influx of German sailors, most of whom were

either Nazis or Nazi sympathizers, except for the captain, who was an outspoken *Deutschnazionaler* (a German Nationalist) but not a Nazi.

Erwin Frenkel 'Strangely enough the German Nazis and their sympathizers at the camp spoke quite openly about many official members of the Nazi party in England who remained free after the outbreak of the war, and as the Camp Commandant stated: "We know what to do with them; we know where they are and we can watch them, but with you (meaning the Jews and anti-Nazis), we don't know . . ." The arrival of the Nazis led to tension and some bad confrontations. One ex-concentration camp inmate, Kaminsky, recognised a KZ camp guard and started to chase him shouting, "Jetzt werden wir abrechenen mit dir schweinehund" ("Now we will get even with this pig"). The soldiers prevented a possible murder and the potential victim was removed to another internment camp. Our repeated appeals and persistent requests to be separated from the Nazis did not succeed.'

Internment was soon followed by deportation to overseas countries. According to records published later, nearly 7 000 men were transported to Canada between 29 June and 2 August 1940. Many of the deportees considered themselves firm friends of England; they felt that the English people, like the Jewish people, were the enemies of any dictatorships, racism and the like, as represented by Nazism and Fascism. They could not comprehend the reason for their internment and deportation, unless the British Government suspected them to be potential fifth columnists. It is also interesting to note that the POWs, protected by the Geneva Convention, travelled first-class, whereas the civilian internees travelled steerage, behind barbed wire and guarded by machine guns.

Erwin Frenkel 'The internees from Seaton were deported in two transports. The first included Mr Hirsch, a friend of mine who continually spoke about Zionism and Eretz Israel. His expectations that he might be sent to Australia, where his sister Mrs Kallai lived, did not materialize. His transport was sent to Canada, where it arrived safely. Our last farewell prior to his departure was, "Lehitraot B'Eretz Israel" ("To meet in the Land of Israel"). I felt lonely after Hirsch's departure, although I was ten years younger than he. I remember only five young people in camp, three baptized Jews and two Jews. I was one of the latter, 18 years of age at the time.'

Erwin Frenkel was but one of many young Jewish boys, born and bred in Germany, Austria or anywhere else in Nazi-occupied Europe,

who were on the run from the Gestapo and whose survival during the Nazi holocaust depended to a great extent on individual ingenuity and the will to live.

He was born into a Zionist family. His father, a member of the *Mizrahi* (Zionist-Religious) Party, had served in the Imperial Austrian Army during the First World War, and by profession was a Cantor in the Leopoldsgasse Synagogue in Vienna. Erwin exhibited talents for music and singing from early childhood. At the age of 6 he began formal training to play the piano and the organ. When he was 7 he became a professional chorister; he was a soloist at the age of 8 and a choirmaster at 14. At the insistence of the Viennese music teacher, Professor Morini, he conducted the best choir in Vienna, on the Jewish High Holidays—Rosh Hashanah, Yom Hakipurium Sukkoth. Frenkel was also active in the Zionist Youth Movement, as a member of the *Gordoniya* which was part of the *Hashomer Hatzayir* (The Young Watchman) Organization, and became a general Zionist Youth Leader at the age of 16.

Not long after the departure of the first transport, the remaining internees, including Erwin Frenkel, who were interned in Warner's Holiday Camp in Seaton were brought to Liverpool. They boarded a ship of 18 000 tons, the *Arandora Star*, headed for Canada. Altogether, there were about 1 400 Italians and 600 Germans and Austrians, the latter including the civilian internees as well as the crew from the sunken ship *Adolf Wehrman*. On the third day out of Liverpool the *Arandora Star* was struck by two torpedoes from a German submarine, and only 861 of those aboard were rescued. Erwin Frenkel was one of them.

Erwin Frenkel 'The *Arandora Star* disaster was a monument to muddling by those responsible for the deportation of internees, as well as by those who were in command of the ship, and the people on it. No emergency drill whatsoever was arranged. More than half of the life-boats were unseaworthy and the loud-speaker and lighting systems did not work. The result of this unpreparedness was an uncontrolled panic. Consequently, when people boarded the lifeboats before they were lowered into the water, the ropes holding them broke, and many who might have been saved were drowned.

'The situation evoked some extraordinary behaviour. One sixty-year-old German Jew smoked one cigarette after another and refused to leave the ship because, as he said, he had already seen the picture. Many Italians, holding on to the ropes, were suspended like bunches of grapes on the sides of the ship. An outside onlooker would have thought they were afraid of the water because it was wet and cold.

They knew full well they had to get off the ship because it was sinking, but they went down with her.

'Rafts and lifebelts were thrown overboard, for people to hold on to. Some managed to do so, but others in the water were killed or knocked out and drowned. Some others, who jumped into the water with lifebelts on, broke their necks in doing so. I jumped into the water a few minutes before the ship disappeared. A remarkable gesture of loyalty to the sea-law was given by the German captain of the sunken *Adolf Wehrman* (who had continuously declared himself not to be a Nazi) when he joined the captain of the *Arandora Star* on the latter's bridge to help with the direction of the ship's abandonment; he went down with it and its captain.

'Being a good swimmer, I was able to watch the terrible spectacle from a safe distance. There was a final explosion of the boiler, the ship tilted at an angle of about 70 degrees and all the people on the top deck screamed as they slid down. Then—no ship, no raft, no lifebelt, a sight that haunted me for many nights. Eventually, I was picked up by a raft on which a space had become available because the man occupying it had died. In the water, meanwhile, people were drowning, through exhaustion or heart attacks. One Jewish man, Schlamovitch, who had been butler to a wealthy German and had been able to bring all kinds of provisions for the trip, became insane and called out: "What a great pity it is to lose all that beautiful salami". He then sank from fatigue. A German painter called out "I wish to die in this beautiful solitude", and drowned himself. One professed Nazi and his son were in the water trying to help each other. The father had a heart attack and went under. The son deliberately followed him.

'About six hours after I got on the raft, we were spotted by a Sunderland flying boat. The crew dropped what we thought must have been food and cigarettes, but none reached our raft. About three hours later, we were picked up by a Canadian destroyer and landed at the nearest port, Greenock in Scotland. Two weeks later we were again transported to Liverpool where we boarded the *Dunera*.

'Life on the *Arandora Star* during the two days before it was sunk by a German submarine was quite pleasant. The accommodation was reasonably good and the military crew was friendly. The German prisoners of war—the sailors, many of whom were Nazis—did not waste time whilst on the *Arandora Star* to utilize the free movements on the ship, in inspecting the lifeboats and had apparently picked the best for themselves just in case . . . When the torpedo struck, the German sailors went through a precise operation. They lowered the chosen lifeboats, and after evacuating as many of their men as they could at high speed, waited in the water for the others, hitting over the

head any "stranger" who attempted to board *their* lifeboat. Eventually, the British press was full of horror stories about the behaviour of internees at the time of the *Arandora Star's* sinking. This piece of horrible propaganda was partly responsible for the attitude towards us, the survivors, in particular (a mixture of fear and hatred) of the troops on the *Dunera* who were bitter and angry as a result of the happenings at Dunkirk, which also contributed to their behaviour later on.

'When Hitler and his Nazi hordes entered Austria on 12 March 1938, my mother insisted that I should leave without delay. She was afraid I might get involved in fights with the Nazis so, in May 1938, I left for Switzerland, via Trieste. When I left Austria, I had two suitcases packed with clothing and many other personal belongings, and I also had twenty marks in money. But when the *Arandora Star* was sunk, I lost everything I had. I even lost the clothes I wore at the time, a "T" shirt, shorts and underwear after I was picked up by the Canadian destroyer. I had hung them up in the sorting room to dry and walked around barefoot, wrapped in a blanket. After a couple of hours, when I returned to get my clothes, I found nothing. They were stolen. One of the sailors took pity on me and swapped a great coat for my blanket. I was compelled to wear the great coat, with nothing else underneath, for some time.'

Another internee told one of the most moving stories of the disaster; it concerned a Jew by the name of Moschkowsky.

Hans Margis 'His age could have been between 60 and 65. He had a kind face and always a twinkle in his eyes. At times he reminded me of the monks whose pictures could be seen on labels attached to some of the Rhine wine bottles. He was small, roundish and the bald top of his head was surrounded by a wreath of white hair. He was very popular with all other inmates who frequently assembled around him whilst he gave a commentary on current world affairs, often drawing parallels with events in ancient history.

'Even the Nazi prisoners treated him with great respect and listened to him attentively. Prior to leaving Germany for England, he had been editor of one of the leading Berlin midday newspapers. He was always cheerful and happy, a nature not many people are fortunate to possess.

'When the *Arandora Star* was torpedoed, he managed to find a small raft in the water and was later joined by two boys aged between 16 and 18. Unfortunately, it soon became evident that the raft could not support all of them, and all other rafts, as far as they could see,

were also overcrowded. It was then that Moschkowsky said: "I enjoyed my life but yours are still in front of you. Good luck boys." He let go of the raft and disappeared.'

The paradox of the situation was that when the internees had asked for an opportunity to sail to Eretz Israel, they were told by the British authorities that no ships were available and that it was too dangerous to attempt such a voyage in wartime. But the seas were calm and boats were available when the refugees were forcibly deported elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the BBC monitoring station near the Kitchener Camp was dismantled, the radio equipment transported elsewhere, and documents burnt. Some days later the inmates of the camp were informed that they would be transferred elsewhere, each man being allowed to take with him only as much luggage as he could carry. Most of the inmates' possessions were therefore left behind, with little hope of ever seeing them again.

They were brought by military trucks to the Sandwich railway station. The guards were friendly and calm, and helped the weak, sick and elderly to carry whatever luggage they had. Although conditions on the train were so cramped that it was almost impossible to move around, the politeness of the guards and their general behaviour, offering cigarettes and comforting those who looked dejected, as if they had lost all trust in mankind, made everybody feel more comfortable and contented. As the train moved on, some soldiers, who were sleepier than most of the internees, entrusted the latter with their rifles while they slept: 'a scene that no general would be able to comprehend', as Kurt Fischer remarked.

After travelling all night the internees found themselves in Liverpool, where a steamer similar to the one which had brought them from Ostend to Dover less than a year before was docked at the wharf. The order to board the ship was given immediately, and no sooner were the internees aboard than the vessel sailed. Conjecture and guesswork as to their destination were rife but the steamer pulled into another port and the order was given to disembark.

The men were ordered to fall into platoon formation, four abreast. Surrounded by police and soldiers, they heard the terse commands 'quick march' and 'left, right . . . left, right, left'. They then realized that they were no longer civilian internees but prisoners-of-war. As the men marched through the small township, its population lined both sides of the road to stare at them, and now and again one could hear epithets like 'Bloody Germans!'. A rumour spread amongst the internees that the local population had been told they were captured German parachutists.

It was a journey from one internment camp surrounded by barbed wire to another. The difference was that Kitchener Camp was near London, while the new camp was on the outskirts of Ramsay on the Isle of Man. Whereas at the Kitchener Camp the inmates were housed in military barracks and slept on iron beds with hard military mattresses, at the Isle of Man Camp they were housed in elegant resort hotels and slept in comfortable beds.

High barbed-wire fences, many armed guards and severe restrictions on movement transformed a beautiful summer resort where well-to-do Europeans had spent pre-war holidays into an internment camp.

Hans Hammerstein 'Our "prisoners' camp" consisted of decent hotels, good rooms, and beds with linen. We elected house leaders and felt well, maybe better than at the Kitchener Camp . . . As more internees arrived from many parts in England, we were ordered to sleep two men in a bed but the linen had to be given up in the morning, as, according to regulations, internees are not permitted to have such luxuries. (Interesting to note that we had linen even in the German KZ Sachsenhausen.)

'Our letters were censored and no radio or newspapers were allowed. We did not know how the war was progressing, or what was happening anywhere round the world. The occasional words exchanged with the guards were interpreted in many ways and created all kinds of rumours. Sometimes, when an old newspaper which had been used as a wrapping for vegetables or something else came into our possession, the little we learned from it gave much food for imagination. We could not imagine that England, which had saved us from the Nazis, would betray us.

'I remember that one of the inmates, a Communist who was also considered a great pessimist, explained the situation thus: "The Nazis are in Paris . . . tomorrow they will occupy the whole of France. Their next objective will be Ireland because the Irish are enemies of England, and therefore are the friends of Germany . . . the stepping stone will be the Isle of Man. The commandant of the camp will surrender to the Germans, and tell him about the 2 000 Jews here." A number of the inmates even thought of suicide.

'We Zionists organized meetings in order to explain the true position of the Jewish people at that time and to transmit our ideas to the fellow prisoners about the solution of our problems. Later, in the internment camps in Australia, we began a systematic action to spread our ideas about a Jewish homeland as a means of ending a people's homelessness and constant wandering from country to country. But, nevertheless, I was frustrated and, as a result, I became

depressed and, at times, apathetic to everything I myself preached. Instead of finding myself in Eretz Israel, I was, together with many of my friends in a prisoners' camp, somewhere on the other side of the world. Who knows how long the war will continue? Five years? More? Or less? But, as it often happens in such situations, when one is depressed, one's friends are trying to pull or drag him out of it.

'But now and again, some felt mentally depressed, depressions which, I thought, could suddenly, all too easily lead to serious mental disorders. (About two years later, some of those inmates had to be taken to mental hospitals.) One day as I sat in the open air, a man named Michaelis came up to me and broke into wailing. He told me once again about himself and his brother being in a German concentration camp. His brother was murdered there. If the Nazis came to the Isle of Man, Michaelis said, they would murder him too. I tried to quieten him and told him that all of us must keep calm as we would need all our nerve later and that we would all share the same fate, whatever was in store. I also told him to write a letter to the British Government, describe the story of his life, and ask for his release. Michaelis wrote the letter, but no reply was ever received.

'Some of my friends urged me not to give up hope and convictions, but to act more vigorously in organizing the Zionists and sympathizers and try to make contacts with Zionist authorities wherever possible, outside the camp. Meanwhile we decided to intensify the study of the Hebrew language, Jewish History, literature and to get more acquainted with various aspects of Hebrew culture. But in addition to regular study groups, we organized many special functions in the form of lectures, debates, symposiums and such other. The themes or topics of these special functions were manifold. I will mention those I remember: depression; community; Jewish press; Jewish-Arab relations; how Jewish was Herzl?; Hanukah evening; The significance of the Maccabean movement; Jewish music and Jewish song; The Jewish people and the peace conference; The Jewish press in Germany, 1933-9; The Jewish Corps in Eretz Israel; Purim evening; Galuth; Trumpeldor and the Jewish Legion in World War I; Menahem Ussishkin memorial evening; Eretz Israel in 1927—an eye-witness report . . . and many others.

'To accommodate all those who were eager to hear a famous speaker on a popular subject, I succeeded in obtaining the use of a large dining hall in one of the big hotels. But regular lessons were given to smaller groups assembled in bedrooms or any other place available. Among others, I recall a most interesting commentary by Professor Freyhan on Shakespeare. There was also a choir of a good standard, but it could only practise in the street for lack of room inside the hotels.

'It was very difficult to organize the above-mentioned functions. It is much easier to reminisce about them. Same as in everyday life in a free society, so it was in camp: a large part of the public was indifferent. The intellectuals who were able to prepare lectures or had the talent to lead a discussion were often too lazy to prepare themselves for a particular task. Again and again the few idealists had to push them and "make" them do what was required. But we did it. Books were replaced by notes from memory. Writing paper was replaced by toilet paper. Notices and invitations as well as posters were written out or painted over by hand on pieces of old cardboard boxes.'

Kurt Fischer 'The camp was surrounded by beautiful scenery. In the distance, on one side, a castle could be seen whilst on another side, where the barbed-wire fence bordered a cobble-stoned street, pedestrians from a nearby village used to stop to have short conversations with us. On Sundays the whole village would assemble at the fence; whilst some conversed with us, most of them regarded us as if we were some foreign animals in a zoo.'

The internees' stay on the Isle of Man ended suddenly and unexpectedly. The German blockade had already jeopardized Britain's food supplies and it was decided to send the internees overseas, both to ease the pressure on food resources and to minimize security risks. Once again the great majority of refugees were to suffer because of the small but potentially pro-German elements among them.

Leo Tait 'Following the arrival of survivors from the *Arandora Star* at Huyton Camp, a most dignified inter-denominational service of three religions was held the same evening. In addition to the prayers and psalms recited at the service, in memory of the many men who had lost their lives by drowning, the famous pianist Peter Stadlen played appropriate music. Many of the hundreds of people who crowded the big hall were crying. They knew they might meet the same fate in days to come.

'Since very few internees had volunteered for transportation to countries overseas due to the sinking of the *Arandora Star*, a compulsory list of men to fill the number required for the next transport was made earlier the same day. As I worked in the kitchen, I was automatically exempted. Many men included in the list who had families in England begged me to change places with any one of them and some even offered me as much as £100. But I refused, being certain the ship would be torpedoed, as the *Arandora Star* had been.

'As we internees were not allowed to have newspapers, we tried to obtain one through the "back door". On the morning after the memorial service, I succeeded with the help of our guard, in purchasing a morning paper for two shillings and sixpence, the normal cost of which was one penny. The headlines were something like this: "Evacuation of children to Canada stopped"; "Irish Sea Mined"; "Invasion Imminent".

'At that moment, I decided to volunteer for transfer overseas. It is better, I thought, to drown than to fall into Nazi hands again. It was not difficult to be included in the next transport. One and a half hours later we were assembled for embarkation.'

Document: The Dunera Statement.[3] pp. 1-2

'The following gives a short account of the treatment which the 962 internees now in No 7 Camp, Eastern Command, Australia, experienced during their voyage to Australia on board HMT *Dunera*. The full complement of internees arriving on the *Dunera* is made up of those in No 8 Camp to whom all conditions of treatment as set out below apply automatically.

'All persons here were interned between May and July 1940 in consequence of general internment orders, and are practically all refugees from Nazi oppression, on account of their Jewish descent, their political convictions or their religious faith. Nearly all are classified as "C" class cases by Special Aliens Tribunals, declaring them officially to be refugees from Nazi oppression and freeing them from most restrictions.

Conditions determining internees to go overseas

'Before their transportation overseas [the undersigned internees] were in various English camps and were either sent overseas voluntarily on the strength of various promises made, or were compelled to do so.

'(a) The internees coming from the temporary camp Lingfield . . . were informed that they were going to a more permanent camp in England. They were accordingly in no way prepared for a long journey overseas.

'(b) The internees coming from the internment camp Huyton near Liverpool . . . were promised by the Camp Commandant that

1 going overseas meant more personal freedom, subject to certain restrictions, and possibilities for work in one's sphere
2 their wives and children would follow shortly

3 Full title: *Memorandum Submitted to His Excellency the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom in Australia by the Internees from England, at No. 7 Camp, Eastern Command Hay, N.S.W., 1941*, 13 pp. roneoed. The author is believed to be Dr Franz Eichenberg.

3 any prospective transmigrants would not be placed in a worse position as regards their migration plans.

'On being personally consulted, the officers in charge of the camp persuaded all inquirers to volunteer as there was a great future overseas in store for them.

'It was officially announced that 80 lbs luggage could be taken, and in parts of the camp kitbags were provided to take necessities for the first days of the voyage. Nearly all the internees coming from Huyton were volunteers, only a limited group were compelled to join, ostensibly to make up the requisite number for the transport.

'(c) The internees from the Central Camp and the Onchan Camp, Douglas, Isle of Man, were promised that

1 they were going to Canada

2 their wives and children would be in the same convoy.

'In the Onchan Camp the future Canadian postal address was officially announced. The married men from these camps volunteered, the unmarried ones were compelled to go. They were allowed to take up to 80 lbs luggage.

'(d) The internees coming from the internment camp Ramsay, Isle of Man, were mostly members of the former Kitchener Camp, Richborough, Kent, i.e., refugees from Germany who had found asylum in England pending their further transmigration overseas. They were promised by their Camp Commandant

1 that they would most probably go to Canada

2 that as regards the transmigration they would be in no way placed in a worse position by joining the transport

3 that the transmigrants to the USA could do nothing better than to volunteer for this transport especially as they would save their sea passage money in that way

4 that overseas they would regain freedom of movement.

'They were allowed to take 80 lbs luggage with them, and the luggage was examined by an officer before it was forwarded.

'It will clearly be observed from the above that the internees arriving on board HMT *Dunera* were in the great majority men who had volunteered for this transport and had done so on the strength of promises which appeared to give an infinitely greater chance of helping in the fight against Nazi Germany than sitting behind barbed wire in England. They were men with great hopes and bright spirits who arrived at Liverpool for their embarkation overseas on 10 July 1940.'

These bright hopes, and with them an optimistic faith in the British military and government, were dashed as soon as the internees boarded the *Dunera*, a former British India Company Steamer of

12 345 tons. They were misled in every way. And their conditions on board were comparable to a Nazi concentration camp. The 2 542 internees on the *Dunera* then endured an eight weeks journey to Australia, to the other end of the world. The *Dunera* was a 'hell-ship' which led not to freedom, but to a new exile. It became a symbol of the apparently endless migrations and refugees of the Jewish people in history which was described in the *Jewish Standard* as 'one *Dunera* after another throughout successive generations'.[4] The article by A. Abrahams continued:

'Early in July the refugees, some already concentrated in a camp at Huyton, near Liverpool, and others in other parts of the country, were told that they were being shipped to Canada for their own safety in the event of invasion, and that in Canada they would be set free and allowed to work. Others, awaiting emigration to America, were informed that they would be sent abroad, and would eventually enter the United States. The various stories were spread in order to reconcile the refugees to their trans-shipment. They were told they could each carry eighty pounds of luggage, would be given satisfactory accommodation, and would be treated like ordinary passengers aboard ship. But within a few hours they were to find that they were in the hands of a savage, murderous and villainous band of soldiers who treated them worse than any Nazi prisoner had ever been treated in a prison camp . . .

'They were kept waiting on the embarkation pier . . . and then had to proceed through a narrow doorway on to a landing stage. Behind this door soldiers were posted who subjected everybody to an exceedingly rough search. Everything carried in the hands or loose in the pockets was taken off the internees . . . and . . . thrown disorderly on the ground. Valuables were stuck into sacks . . . No receipts were given except by one single searching group . . . Appeals to officers were fruitless . . . Attempts of protest were roughly suppressed . . .

'The steamship *Dunera* was making, not for Canada, but Australia. The refugees had been deliberately deceived, even to the extent of being told that they would travel in a convoy, which would include other ships carrying their wives and children to the same destination—a cruel and callous untruth. When the ship left, the refugees were forced below decks, and crowded together with insufficient sleeping accommodation . . . Buckets for urine were provided. The buckets were soon overflowing and sewage flooded the decks as the ship moved. In the midst of it men were lying on the floor to sleep, for in the early part of the journey there were neither hammocks nor blankets . . .

4 A. Abrahams, 'On the Subject of Hell-Ships', *Jewish Standard* (London), 1 August 1947.

'For weeks the hatches were kept down. Neither daylight nor natural air ever reached the decks. For weeks one was dependent on electric light and on artificial air supplies through ventilators—and that in overcrowded decks on a journey through the tropics. The hatches were opened later periodically; the portholes remained closed the whole time . . . the upper parts of the ship, where one would have been in the fresh air, were absolutely out of bounds, being barred by barbed wire and sentries with bayonets . . . For the longest part of the voyage the upper parts of the ship could be entered only with bare feet. On one occasion a sergeant threw an empty bottle in among the passing internees. The bottle broke and the internees were driven over the splinters with bare feet. The grinning Lascars looked on as the white internees were subjected to that treatment . . .

'There were approximately two dozen seats in the latrines for sixteen hundred internees . . . Queues of waiting men would assemble during the rush hours, so that nature had to be relieved in the view of impatient witnesses . . .

'Being without any luggage, most of the internees spent this terrible voyage without toothbrush or paste, comb or hairbrush, for weeks without soap (later on, one piece of soap was issued to every twenty men once or twice a week), for weeks without towels, only one shirt, one pair of pants, one pair of stockings . . .

'No lifebelts were issued at any time; no exercise or boat drills were ever carried out . . . the internees were pushed by officers, sergeants and privates, beaten, driven along with the butts of rifles, and otherwise ill-treated.

'During searches and confiscations—carried out through the whole period of the journey—internees were beaten and on some occasions stabbed with bayonets.

'During complaints about confiscated valuables the refugee deck leaders were threatened with the irons.

'Chief Rabbi Dr Ehrentrau (one of the refugee internees), who had written to the Commander of the ship complaining of the conditions, was warned . . . that he would hang him from the mast, swing him by his beard round the mast, and throw him overboard.

'Two internees who had been found out of bounds were tied to a post by one of the Lieutenants who was apparently in a state of drunkenness, insulted with words such as "German Jewish swine", "sons of German Jewish dogs", and one of them was beaten until he bled. His screams of pain could be heard from afar.

'Such is the story, in brief, of one of the hell-ships on which Jews were carried to Australia from England under the direction of the Government of the day. When Mr Creech-Jones or other Ministers raise their eyes sanctimoniously to heaven and complain of the

insanitary conditions of Jewish refugee ships making their way to Palestine, it would be well to remember that these Jews are members of the same nation who have learnt from bitter experience that it is better to travel in one's own hell-ship than in that of any other people. It is better to travel in a hell-ship making its way to redemption than in one making its way to new exile . . .

'The Jews in the DP camps have passed through even worse than a *Dunera* voyage. Only those who understand this can appreciate why many thousands of them would prefer to travel, perhaps on rafts, than on well-found boats designed to perpetuate dispersion and expose them eternally to one *Dunera* after another throughout successive generations.'

The voyage of the *Dunera* was the result of an agreement between the British and Australian Governments. Two days after the departure of the *Dunera* the London *Times* reported (12 July 1940) that the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, had stated that 'the United Kingdom Government requested the Commonwealth to help solve the problem of their custody by taking internees for the duration of the war. The Government had readily agreed, and will defray the cost of camps and guards.'

CHAPTER 3

The Hell-Ship Dunera

Document: 'The Dunera Statement', pp. 2-4, 'Embarkation'

'A As far as is known the first transport to arrive [at Liverpool] were about 500 men from Huyton. They were kept waiting on the embarkation pier for the boat to make fast and had then to proceed through a narrow doorway on to the landing stage. Behind this door soldiers were posted who subjected everybody to an exceedingly rough search. Everything carried in hand or loose in the pockets was taken off the internees. All less valuable effects like gloves, toilet utensils, eatables, pipes, etc., were thrown disorderly on the ground. Valuables were stuffed into sacks or disappeared openly into the pockets of the searching soldiers. Soon rows of emptied wallets were lying on the floor, the contents of emptied attache cases were roughly thrown about, and the officially provided kitbags could be seen all over the place. Valuable documents, identity and emigration papers, testimonials of all kinds, were taken away, thrown on the ground or even ostensibly torn up before the eyes of their very owners.

'No receipts were given, except by one single searching group. Appeals to the officers standing by were fruitless. Attempts of protest were roughly suppressed.

'A dazed crowd of men found themselves herded together in the Lower and Upper No. 2 Mess Decks on board HMT *Dunera*. Of all the articles taken away on the landing stage, only a very few were ever seen again.

'B The members of the second transport from Huyton arriving a few hours later were ordered to pick up two suitcases standing on the railway platform.

'1 Part were ordered into the Upper No. 2 Mess Deck and, on entering, all attache cases and the provided kitbags were taken away. The suitcases were opened (sometimes by force) in spite of the fact that they did not belong to the person carrying them. Articles of value and interest were taken out. This procedure was stopped after a short time, and the internees were ordered to place the suitcases in heaps on one of the decks. The internees were then ordered to gather on one side of the deck and to move to the other through a row of soldiers.

Here they were closely searched with results similar to that of the first group. Everything loose which was found was taken away.

'2 The rest were sent into Lower No. 3 Mess Deck. Here they were ordered to sit down and to empty everything out of their pockets on the mess tables. A body search and a thorough examination of the articles lying on the table ensued, in which anything of value was taken away. There did not appear to be any system as regards the other articles taken. In some cases even toothbrushes, soap, notebooks, were removed. Some time later it was declared that a mistake had been made and some sacks containing articles impounded on this, the Upper No 3 and Upper No 2 Deck were emptied out on the floor and on one of the tables. It was found that only a few articles of value had remained in the sacks.

'The internees commenced the following day to take steps to trace the rightful owners of these articles, but before this could have been carried to a conclusion, the remaining articles were again collected by soldiers and taken away.

'C The group from the internment camp Lingfield arrived next. They were also asked to take suitcases with them from the station, but were ordered to leave them on the top deck. Here all attache cases and bags of all kinds were taken off them. On arrival in the Upper No. 3 Mess Deck they were treated similarly to the aforementioned group.

'D The first part of the group arriving from the various camps on the Isle of Man were quartered on the Sergeants' Deck on the forepart of the ship. The remainder on the aft part, together with non-refugee internees and Italians, later disembarked at Melbourne.

'1 Of those placed in the forepart all cases, bags, and other portables, were taken away on their entering the ship, and a body search was commenced, but not completely carried out, while they were seated at their mess tables. Some of the articles taken off them were placed in large bowls and were later returned. Most articles of value were missing.

'2 Those moved on to the aftpart of the ship were searched when they entered the Upper Mess Deck. Everything found in the pockets was taken away, including handkerchiefs, etc. All articles were thrown to the ground, except most of the valuables which were pocketed by the soldiers. Suddenly the soldiers disappeared, leaving a great pivot of the impounded articles lying about, which the internees then commenced to re-distribute.

'All these searches were carried out without any discrimination, accompanied by acts of violence and resulted in the loss of an enormous amount of money, valuable articles, toilet necessities and important documents which have never been recovered. As regards the incidents appertaining to the embarkation of the internees, statements have been made by persons who were present.'

Statement made by . . . Attached to 'The Dunera Statement'
'I was . . . at Huyton near Liverpool. I had certain jewels inherited from my late grandmother which I produced to the officer in charge at the general examination. The officer examined the jewels and returned them into my keeping . . . We left Huyton at about 12 o'clock on 10 July and arrived at Liverpool pier at about 3 o'clock. Our transport consisted of about 500 men. I had my jewels with me in a little jewel box which I carried in my right inner pocket. After having waited for about an hour we were ushered on to the embarkation quay through a narrow gangway. On this several sergeants and NCOs were stationed who submitted all of us to a rigid body search. All personal belongings were taken off us and thrown on heaps on the quay.

'I was among the first to be submitted to this search and the sergeant who was dealing with me found the jewel box in my coat. He wanted to place this in his pocket, but I objected and asked him to call his officer.

'Hearing our discussion an officer arrived from the direction of the ship. He wore a blank black beret with a silver badge, I suppose of the Royal Tank Corps. I informed this officer in a great hurry that the jewels were representing my whole fortune and that I had taken them with me to start a new life overseas.

'The officer opened the box, looked at the jewels and said "I'll keep it for you". I thanked him for this. In this moment I was pushed from behind on to the gangway. While the talk with the officer was lasting, the small bag containing my personal belongings, e.g. a pair of slippers, toothbrush, a pair of pyjamas, and toilet utensils, was torn out of my hand and I have never seen it again.

'During one of the quick walks which we were allowed to take on deck on HMT *Dunera* under guard I recognized a few days later the before-mentioned officer among the officers on duty. I tried to speak to him, but he ordered me to get back into line and to get away. When I passed him again on the next round of the same walk, the Sergeant was standing beside him and beckoned me to come forward. He asked me "What were you talking about to this officer?" I replied that I wanted to give him my name and accommodation on the ship as he was keeping some valuable jewels for me. He inquired, "What jewels?", and I informed him that I thought it was the gentleman standing beside him who was at that time wearing a helmet, but who had at the time of our embarkation worn a beret which I presumed to be that of the Royal Tank Corps.

'The Sergeant Major turned to me and said, "You cocker! Don't talk so bloody much or you will go in the bunker. Get away now!"

'I informed the deck leaders of my case and they mentioned it to the Sergeant who was presumed to have been the person connected with the police of the Secret Service. I had no further chance to mention the case to the officer concerned and the jewels have never been returned to me. The jewels consisted of—

A pair of earrings with big diamonds and

1 old fashioned brooch in the shape of a crescent with diamonds.

They were valued in Switzerland at about 4,500 S.frs. and in England . . . between £120 and £150.'

Kurt Fischer 'Evidently we were not fast enough because the soldiers [at the pier] kept calling, "Go on, hurry up, hurry up", and as I boarded the ship I noticed one of the military crew pushing the man in front of me because he refused to surrender his luggage. It was quickly taken from him and, together with the rucksack taken from me, was thrown on a fast growing heap. Another soldier frisked us superficially and ordered us to go below. Soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets were everywhere and some parts of the ship were surrounded by barbed wire. Nobody knew and no one could guess the reason for all the precautions.'

About 2000 men were squeezed into all available parts of the *Dunera*, which had previously been converted into a troop-ship. Holds designed to accommodate ninety soldiers were now filled with about 300 prisoners. Later, it was learned that some of the inmates' luggage had been thrown into the sea. Even letters and personal documents, found in the pockets of the prisoners' coats and trousers, were torn up or thrown overboard.'

A few people, including Kurt Fischer, had hidden their passports in their boots and managed to hide some coins in tubes of toothpaste and shaving cream. All money had to be deposited in the *Dunera* bank and the internees were forbidden to carry any cash whatsoever.

Document 'The Dunera Statement', Part IV, pp. 11-12.

'From the outset our status aboard the *Dunera* was ill-defined. The soldiers openly expressed the belief that we were parachutists or, in any case, prisoners of war. The treatment dealt out was accordingly. The internees were addressed with the vilest curses only. For days the officers refused to listen to the internees' representatives about the many threats and bodily punishments dealt out indiscriminately by NCOs and men on every occasion. Orders of every kind were given to the accompaniment of loaded rifles with bayonets fixed. Kicks and hits with rifle butts were a daily occurrence. Any attempt to seek recourse was roughly frustrated. The slightest reason was good

enough to provoke punishment on the spot by sentries without any investigation or chance of redress.

'The elderly internees and those who had gone through the severe treatment at the hands of Nazi agents in German concentration camps before they had found refuge in England became so despondent that they hid away whenever a uniform came into sight. The brutality of manners and methods displayed was such that talk of suicide was current. The material losses experienced from the beginning, coupled with the hourly threat of severe punishment, produced an atmosphere of fearful apprehension, intensified by the feeling of utter helplessness at the mercy of uniformed representatives of a country which had herself given the internees refuge from the persecution of the Nazis, and to whom their loyalty had been proved in more than one way. Any protest made to officers and men on the grounds of human dignity and the position as "friendly" enemy aliens, proved to be victims of Nazi oppression by British Tribunals, was ignored.'

Hans Hammerstein 'I added my suitcase to the already high pile, but kept the portfolio containing my passport and other important documents, telling the soldier what they were. He snatched the portfolio from me, threw it as far away as he could and gave me a jerk that sent me flying after my friends. We descended below decks into a large room, where everyone had to stand in front of a strong lamp and raise his hands, whilst being searched. Everything was taken away from us—matches, lighters, pocket-knives, money, documents, keys—to be put on a table or on the floor. Documents and other papers, whether they understood them or not, were torn up and thrown away. It was impossible to grasp the fact that British soldiers would rob us of everything and in such a manner. Even in the German concentration camp, the Nazis had made a proper list of everything they took; those who survived were given everything back, and a dead man's belongings were sent to his family. The belongings of those who perished in the gas chambers were not returned as there was no one to receive them.'

Obviously the authorities were anxious for the *Dunera* to leave Liverpool as speedily as possible, because the internees were immediately ordered below, where all portholes had been blacked out and locked. The internees did not know of their departure until much later, when other guards came down and told them that the ship was already far from the shore. It was apparently very calm and no movement had been felt.

In the morning, the first of a long sea voyage that none of the internees had expected, a call was made for volunteers to bring the

breakfast from the galley. With the traditional porridge and some other bits and pieces, there was also a small cup of lime juice and a certain prophylaxis against rickets. Forks and knives were not permitted, only spoons. According to Father Walter Konig, SJ, another *Dunera* internee, who had been expelled in 1939 by the Nazis from the college of St Aloysius at Bad Godesberg on the Rhine, the ship carried 2 700 refugees, 300 prisoners-of-war, and about 500 Italian and German survivors of the ill-fated White Star liner *Arandora Star* (*Twentieth Century*, September 1963).

All the prisoners were issued with hammocks and blankets which, when rolled up, served as cushions or as protection against the hardness of the floor or bench during the day. Many of the prisoners, however, could not use the hammocks because there was not enough room to hang them. The *Dunera* carried many times more people than it was built to accommodate, and many of the prisoners slept on tables, benches or on the decks above, whenever possible. But most of the time they were below, making use of the blankets the best way they could.

Some details regarding conditions aboard the *Dunera* were given to the House of Commons in February 1941 by Colonel Josiah Wedgewood: 'The internees were kept below decks . . . and only allowed on deck one half-hour once or twice a day . . . Brutality seems to have been displayed by the Military Guards . . . internees suffered from serious physical violence, resulting in broken noses, facial injuries, bodily bruises, etc. from fists, rifle butts and the boots of their guardians . . . The internees were robbed of most of their possessions and anything of value was "souvenired" . . . 1200 watches, hundreds of gold wedding rings disappeared.'

Ernst Zutrauen was the son of a major Berlin banker. He migrated to England in 1932 but could not obtain naturalisation before the outbreak of war. His brother Hermann arrived in England in 1938, aged 16, and entered a boarding school in the south of England. Hermann was interned in November 1939 and Ernst could not locate him. Then in April 1940, Ernst himself was interned at Lingfield camp, from which he was transferred to the *Dunera* in July.

Ernst Zutrauen. 'On the second day at sea, the commanding officer called for volunteers to shift whatever was left of the luggage which was still on deck, after the guards had helped themselves to anything they fancied. I was one of the volunteers, anxious to have something to do and to breathe some fresh air. We formed a human chain and by passing pieces of luggage one to another, brought them down to the lower decks. Although we had to work fast under the screaming

commands of the guards—"Faster! Faster!"—I looked around to seek familiar faces and suddenly my eyes met those of my brother Hermann! But we were not allowed to talk to each other. Apparently he had been in a different internment camp, had boarded the ship by another gangway, and was in a separate section of the ship.

'Next day I applied for permission to see a doctor, complaining of sickness. My intention was to try to make contact with other internees who might be able to pass on a message to my brother. In fact Hermann did the same trick, and we were able to meet and talk briefly with each other. I learned from him that he had written me many letters but none of us knew that the British authorities seldom forwarded any mail to or from the internees. Hermann had been interned in a camp on the English south coast. After it was bombed the inmates were moved to another camp in the Midlands. Later they were transferred to Huyton. Whilst there, Hermann was told he could join a transport to sail to Canada, but much as he wanted to proceed there, hoping to use it as an opportunity to unite with our sister in the United States, he resisted the impulse since he felt obliged to wait for my advice with regard to any action. As it happened, my brother was lucky in his decision not to proceed to Canada. If he had agreed, then he too would have been on the *Arandora Star* . . . He decided, however, to join the next transport, thinking it would also sail for Canada, but instead found himself on the *Dunera*.'

On arrival at Hay the Zutrauen brothers sent a message about their well-being to their parents in Berlin, through the offices of the Apostolic Delegation. After internment in Australia, Hermann Zutrauen left for the USA to live with his sister. He studied at the University of California where he obtained a BSc in Chemistry. He then won a scholarship for post-graduate study at the Louis Pasteur Institute in Paris. As it happened, Hermann was the only candidate to qualify under the conditions of the scholarship, which a Jewish couple in New York established in memory of their son who was killed in action while serving in the American Army. A provision of the scholarship was that the applicant had to be a refugee from Nazi oppression. Apparently, Hermann was the only such refugee who desired to study Chemistry. The three Zutrauens settled on three different continents, but tragically their parents perished in one of the Nazi extermination camps.

Document. 'The Dunera Statement', pp. 5-8, 'Treatment During the Voyage'

'(1) *Hygienic Conditions*

'1 a The internees' decks were without exception overcrowded by at least 50 per cent. The Lower No 2 Deck provided for 228 men; it

became accommodation for 354 men. This proportion was true of practically every deck.

'b The congestion was such that people slept at night on mess tables and on the floor during the whole voyage whereas during the day when no hammocks were allowed, staircases and every available inch of floor space was constantly packed. In the event of any accident the congestion alone would have made an attempt at life-saving impossible.

'2 On the first evening it was forbidden to leave the decks. Buckets for urine were provided. The buckets were soon overflowing and sewage flooded the decks as the ship rode. In the midst of it men were lying on the floor to sleep, for at first there were neither hammocks nor blankets.

'3 a For weeks the hatches were kept battened down. Neither daylight nor natural air ever reached the decks. For weeks one was dependent on electric light and artificial air supply through ventilators—and that in overcrowded decks on a journey through the tropics. The hatches were opened later periodically. The portholes remained closed the whole time.

'b No inoculation against typhoid and cholera was administered in spite of the circumstances obviously favouring an epidemic of this kind. Although the most essential medicines were lacking, vital medicines like insulin were thrown overboard when discovered to be owned by internees. False teeth were removed, destroyed or thrown overboard.

'4 The upper parts of the ship where one would have been in the fresh air were absolutely out of bounds. The ways of access were barred by barbed wire and sentries with bayonets. On many days, however, "exercise" was ordered.

'a "Exercise" lasted 15-25 minutes a day on such days as it took place.

'b For the longest part of the voyage the upper parts of the ship could be entered only with bare feet. On one occasion a sergeant threw an empty bottle in among the passing internees. The bottle broke and the internees were driven over the splinters with bare feet. The grinning lascars looked on as the white internees were subjected to that treatment.

'c The order had been issued to run or walk fast during these exercises. Those who did not walk fast were driven along by the sentries with rifle butts or were bruised by blows. At the ends of the decks Lewis guns loaded and completely manned were kept trained on the internees in readiness to shoot. At times officers and sergeants assaulted the passing internees, pushed them, beat them, and insulted and swore at them whilst hitting them. A Roman Catholic priest was among those pushed and beaten in this manner and a Rabbi.

'd In the beginning it was not permissible to evade these exercises. During the absence of the internees created in this manner the decks were searched by sergeants for valuables.

'5 There were open portholes at the kitchen, in the washrooms, and in the latrine. Around all these portholes—including those in the latrines—closely packed groups would stand trying to obtain a little fresh air. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon these portholes too were closed. The air in the internees' quarters defies description, especially in the washplace where the steam from the hot salt water showers mingled with the perspiration of the crowded men.

'6 From the first landing in North West Africa to the first landing in Australia, i.e. during the whole voyage through the tropics, there was fresh water only two or three times a week. During the stops in the African ports where the use of salt water was forbidden because of the danger of contagion, there was no water at all for the cleaning of crockery, washing or bathing—and that in the tropics.

'7 There were approximately two dozen seats in the latrines for 1 600 internees. As the constant stream of salt water rinsing them was much too violent, a number of these seats were constantly smeared with a mixture of salt water and excrement, making their use impossible. In front of the remaining seats queues of waiting men would assemble during the rush hours, so that nature had to be relieved in the view of impatient witnesses. In addition a large part of the internees suffered from violent diarrhoea—in others seasickness took the form of chronic indigestion. Owing to the motion of the sea, the floor of the latrines was almost always flooded with sewage. On days when the sea was rough the state of the lavatory could hardly be described. There was a constant shortage of lavatory paper, with rarely more than two sheets per person. Other paper was not available; newspapers were forbidden.

'8 Razors and shaving utensils had been taken away. During the first five weeks everyone went about with unkempt beards. The resulting rashes and itches were most painful. Those who had managed to keep their razors and were cleanshaven, were threatened with the bunker. Before the arrival in Australia the order was given to remove the beards immediately. For this purpose 8 razors were distributed among 1 600 internees.

'9 Medicaments were short, there was not even a sufficient supply of laxatives. Those who were ill nearly always had to queue for a half or whole hour before being led to a doctor. Not before several weeks had elapsed, the less serious cases were permitted to sit on deck during exercise. Shortly before arrival in Australia men over 54 years of age and cripples were granted about an hour's rest in the fresh air every day.

'10 Being without any luggage the greatest part of the internees had to pass through the tropics as follows:

'a without toothbrush and paste

'b without comb and hairbrush

'c for weeks without soap, later on one piece of soap was issued to every 20 men once or twice a week

'd for weeks without towels, later every ten men received one towel, mostly originating out of opened suitcases of the internees

'e with only one shirt, one pair of pants, only one pair of stockings, often only one handkerchief. Whenever they washed and dried their laundry (drying took place on the mess decks) the internees went without any laundry at all. Through constant washing, especially in salt water, the laundry was soon reduced to rags

'f with only one suit and therefore often with holes all over

'g with but one pair of shoes, mostly with tattered soles on which one had to step through the sewage covering the floors of the latrines.

'11 Conditions prevailing as regards safety measures were as follows:

'No lifebelts were issued at any time.

'No instructions were given for a case of emergency, and no exercise or boat drills were ever carried out . . .'

Hans Hammerstein 'One did not have to be a special observer to realize the conditions on the *Dunera* from the first day. Exercise was ordered every day, and to reach the upper deck we had to climb the stairs between rows of sentries. We walked in a circle in single file for about 15 minutes, with machine guns directed at us from every corner, while the soldiers continuously called out "Quicker! quicker! hurry up!"

'We managed to elect (I don't remember how) "deck leaders" and "spokesmen". For our deck it was a Herr von Zitzewitz, who was a member of a famous German reactionary Junker family. He was young, friendly, intelligent, and knew English perfectly. When the Nazis seized power in Germany von Zitzewitz was a student at Oxford but did not return to his homeland as he did not like living under Nazi rule.

'The general spokesman (except for the German and Italian prisoners of war) was a Dr Eichenberg [a lawyer]. One of his most unpleasant tasks was to pass the Commander's orders to us. One: we were to do the daily fifteen minutes exercise on the deck, barefoot, as the many boots and shoes would spoil the wooden decking! Two: we were to scrub and clean the deck, but this we refused. Our leader, Herr von Zitzewitz, then declared that he would do it himself, and he did. The result was that we followed his example every morning.

One or two of us, together with people of the other groups, did the scrubbing. The soldiers looked on with "rifles at the ready". The Indian seamen also watched, probably seeing depraved and unshaved white men doing dirty work for the first time!

'At first, morale was low. Our room was so overcrowded that men quarrelled because, during the night, one or other was accused of taking up too much space on the floor. Toilet and washing facilities were insufficient and filthy. We could not shave as we had no razors. The German [POWs] who were a minority, were peaceful and agreed to join us, to clean the toilets, keep an orderly "queue", and thus avoided quarrels. All in all, we felt deeply degraded. A year ago we were in our homes with our families, today . . .! I remembered lines of Johann Friedrich Holderlin, the German poet:

> Yet we are destined
> Never to come to rest;
> They falter, they fall
> These suffering mortals,
> In blindness from
> One hour to the next,
> Like water hurled down
> Cliff upon cliff,
> Down the long year, long into
> the unfathomed . . .'

It was common practice for soldiers to search the internees' decks while all internees were above on 'exercise'. Religious garments, Jewish vestments, prayer books, Bibles, and phylacteries were stolen in this way. Some of these vestments had been saved from burning synagogues in Germany. When deck leaders and spokesmen brought this state of affairs to the notice of officers, the officers upheld the conduct of the sergeants. The Colonel in charge of the military informed deck leaders that he had personally ordered these confiscations acting on War Office instructions, but that all property would be restored to the internees at the end of the voyage. When asked to put this in writing, the Colonel threatened to lock deck leaders in the ship's prison and hand them over to the Australian authorities in irons if they continued such political action.

Kurt Fischer 'A rumour went round that we were nearing a danger zone and that a U-boat attack was quite likely. All the exits from our hold had water-tight doors, and in case of an attack on the ship there would be no escape for us. Such an attack was in fact made, by the U-boat which had attacked the *Arandora Star* in the same area not so long before. We learned later that our Captain had noticed the

torpedo coming towards the ship and was able, by a quick turn of the wheel, to change course. The torpedo actually struck the ship, but grazed the side and sank without exploding.'

Robert Kahn 'On the evening preceding the U-boat attack we were issued with hammocks. Being a novice in their use, I apparently strung mine up incorrectly, so whilst the ship was heaving particularly high on the waves, my hammock keeled over and I was tossed out on to the floor. People all around me were groaning and vomiting. The suffocating sour stench was unbearable. I sought escape from it all, in the washrooms and toilets, only to find that they too were awash with vomit. So I tried to find relief under one of the open salt-water showers. There were loud noises from the deck above us as if someone was attacking us. The bangs occurred at intervals of several seconds and I said jokingly to the man under the shower next to mine, "There is probably a U-boat attacking us and those bangs are from our ship's guns firing at it". I hate to think what my feelings would have been had I known that my feeble wise-crack was the simple truth.'

Hans Hammerstein 'I was dishwashing, when suddenly the whole ship trembled, following which the stacks of dishes and plates fell on the floor and smashed to bits. I heard screams of "Torpedo!". We hurried to the stairs which led to the upper deck, but these were barred by barbed wire. Soldiers wearing life belts stood at the top and, aiming their rifles at us, commanded "Disperse, all of you, or we'll shoot!" Some of those below answered: "You swine, you'll save yourselves but let us drown". It is impossible to describe the panic which started as a result of the soldiers' behaviour. A Jew from Frankfurt, Mr Sulzberger, produced prayer books and began to pray loudly. Some Jews joined him. Others brought a long bench and shouted to the soldiers "Open the doors or we shall ram them", and indeed they started doing so. The soldiers fired, but luckily they were warning shots only. An officer then appeared at the top of the stairs, and told us to send up two men so that they could see for themselves that nothing had happened. They went up, and after a short while, returned to tell us that everything was in order; the engines were working and the ship was sailing forward. The men dispersed but the shock was terrible. Even today, after so many years, whenever I think about it I feel panicky.'

Bert Irving Meier 'Two days after the *Dunera* left Liverpool it was attacked by a German submarine, but fortunately, thanks to the able manoeuvring of the ship by the captain, the torpedoes fired by the

submarine brushed off the ship's sides without doing any damage. We were lucky, having been saved from certain death by drowning.

'Thirteen years later, eight years after World War II ended, S.C. Clerque, the Commander of the German submarine which fired the torpedoes at the *Dunera* published a book entitled: *SOS Rettat Unsere Seelen* ('SOS, Save Our Souls'). In this book the former U-boat commander relates that, through his periscope he thought he saw people jumping overboard and had the impression that a mutiny had broken out aboard the *Dunera.* He did not fire another torpedo but, when night fell, sent a few of his sailors in rubber boats to pick up any survivors.

'But all the sailors could find was a number of suitcases floating on the water, in which they found numerous letters written in German and mailed from Germany to civilian internees in prisoner-of-war camps in England.

'Thereupon, the Commander of the submarine radioed a message to all other U-boats in the area informing their captains that the *Dunera* was carrying German prisoners-of-war and requesting them not to attack the ship but to escort it from the danger zone. Clerque was convinced that the *Dunera* was carrying mainly German POWs and did not want a repetition of the *Arandora Star* affair. Thus all the inmates on the *Dunera* were saved.

'When the opportunity arose, while I was in the Tatura internment camp, I volunteered to serve in the Military Employment Company and after my demobilisation, I worked (and still work) as a commercial artist, designer of stage scenery and various other commercial art. In addition I designed, when requested or invited to do so, emblems for Jewish schools and institutions.'

Pinhas Braun 'A Jewish sage, bless his memory, stated a long time ago that blessings should be pronounced not only on or about good things or occurrences, like food, drinks and weddings, but also, God forbid, on bad or sad events.

'As an example, if the guards on the Dunera would not have robbed us of clothing, jewellery, ornaments, suitcases and other belongings, none would have been thrown overboard by them when the torpedoes brushed off the ship. The captain of the submarine which fired the torpedoes would not have sent out sailors in rubber rafts to find out what was happening on the *Dunera* and, as a result, would not have instructed all other German submarines in the vicinity to give the *Dunera* a safe passage. Thus 2 500 people on the ship were saved.

'Therefore the sage was right in saying that blessings should be enunciated on all occasions. As an example: when a Jew is told about

the death of someone, it is customary for him to say Blessed be the True Judge.'

Erwin Frenkel 'On the *Dunera* we were behind barbed wire, at the back of the ship, together with Italian survivors from the *Arandora Star*, some of them outspoken fascists, while others seemed to be neutral. A number of the *Arandora Star* survivors, those who were injured, sick, or needed psychiatric attention, remained in England. The group with which I boarded the *Dunera* comprised approximately 130 people, about 80 of whom were Nazis.

'Life in our sector would have delighted any student of psychology. The neurotic behaviour of some prisoners, engendered by the hostility of the military guards and the cramped conditions, had its funny moments. Perhaps many tragic events also have some humour in them. On one occasion, a Kibitzer (someone watching others play a game, who interferes with advice, etc.) warned a chess player that he would be mated in four moves if he made his contemplated move. The player remarked that it was a game, and if he lost it would be just too bad. Hearing that, the Kibitzer became very hostile. "Are you going to make this move?" he asked. "Yes", replied the player. Thereupon the Kibitzer smacked the player across the face. The player stood up and, in response, gave the Kibitzer a black eye!

'On another occasion, one of the younger people yielded to a sudden impulse and stuck a needle into the buttocks of a man in his middle forties who was sleeping in a hammock. I happened to be standing nearby and the man got up, lashed out and hit me who had done nothing wrong. Next morning at breakfast, I requested the man to apologize as I had had nothing to do with the needle affair. Not only did he refuse but he also abused me, whereupon I decorated his face with a full plate of porridge. Generally speaking, such behaviour is not in accordance with my character; my aggressions are usually intellectual, not physical.

'Two of the inmates, Professor Gutmann and Podbelsky, developed intense hostility to each other. Gutmann, who had managed to obtain a pyjama top from a visiting church group prior to departure, slept on one of the tables. Podbelsky, who had a hammock, chose for some reason to annoy Gutmann by throwing things at him, such as orange peels that he carefully collected for the purpose. One evening, Gutmann was all prepared. In response to the first bombardment. Gutmann, with his fifty-inch waist, and clad in his pyjama top, was "charging" near Podbelsky's hammock, having with him a mop he had "organized" from the bathroom. A good photographer, by taking a photo or, better still, a movie shot of the scene, would no doubt have won a "picture of the year" award.

'One of the inmates of the ship, called Kittell, openly bragged about his participation in the assassination of the leaders of the German Communist Party, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, in 1919. For some reason, unknown to us, he was taken off the *Dunera* when the ship berthed at Cape Town in South Africa. Whilst there, a number of military guards absconded with their loot from the ship. None of it was from us, the survivors of the *Arandora Star*, as we had nothing left to be stolen.

'Following news of the torpedo attack on the *Dunera*, Kaminsky, a baptised Jew who became a communist and who, when in Seaton camp, had tried to kill the German Nazi guard from the concentration camp, decided to escape. He threw himself against a thin partition wall which he previously pinpointed as a likely escape route, if the need arose . . . but ran straight into a bayonet which pierced his arm. At the time I was on deck, behind barbed wire.

The lascars were running around in a panic. In answer to my question as to what was happening, one of the military guards replied: "It is just a boat drill, no need for you to worry you know. We have made sure that should anything happen, all of you will drown this time like rats." Nothing did happen. But a few days later, for some unknown reason, the military guards took the fingerprints of all of us.

'We and the German prisoners-of-war, survivors of the *Arandora Star*, were at the back on the lowest deck. The next two decks were occupied mainly by Italian survivors who, all day and every day played the game "Terno" (a number game similar to dice, but played with the fingers of both hands). They managed somehow to obtain from the kitchen large supplies of garlic and onions, which they ate with much gusto. I suppose it was healthy but both their decks emitted vapours of both these fine vegetables: hence each one of us on the way to the upper barbed-wire deck rushed like mad to minimize the time spent in the gaseous clouds.'

Document Short Story 'The Little Stone' by Boaz Bischofswerder, former Chief Cantor of the Great Synagogue, Berlin. Translated from the original Yiddish by Hershl Bachrach.

'When men who are the crown of God's creation are treated as if they were leprotic corpses and trampled upon as if they were filthy vermin and, at the same time, are being spoken to with blows and beatings, instead of with words and the shining sun looks down from above smiling, you may think it all to be a dirty joke on us, on you, on the world.

'Those were my thoughts, when they loaded us, more than 2 000 refugees, as if we were animals, to ship us overseas. As we were

H.M.T. Ship - Dunera

27. July 1940

Received from

Mall fried Stern.

Mess 45 Aft. end of above ship

1 Gold watch marked

~~H. Miller. Bad type~~ R.A.F. No. 1144224

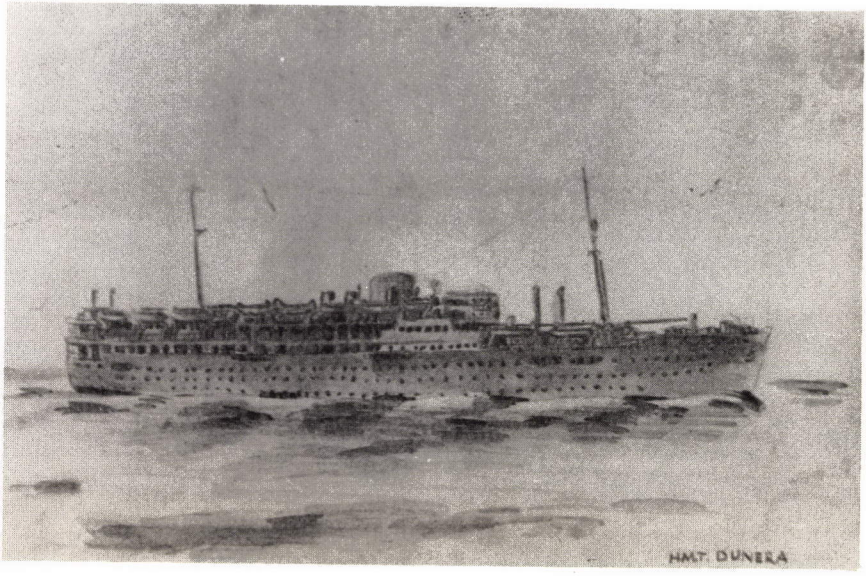
1 Gold Ladys chain

1 Metal oblong wrist watch

1 Real Handled Pocket. Knife

J. Mattinson

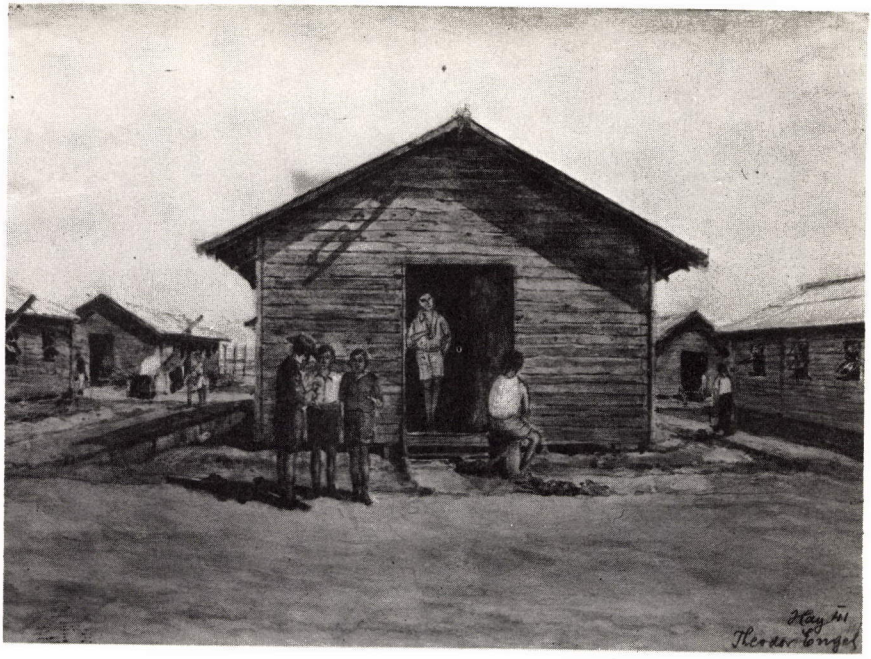
The only known receipt issued to internees on the Dunera.



HMT Dunera, *drawn by Ulrich Laufer.*



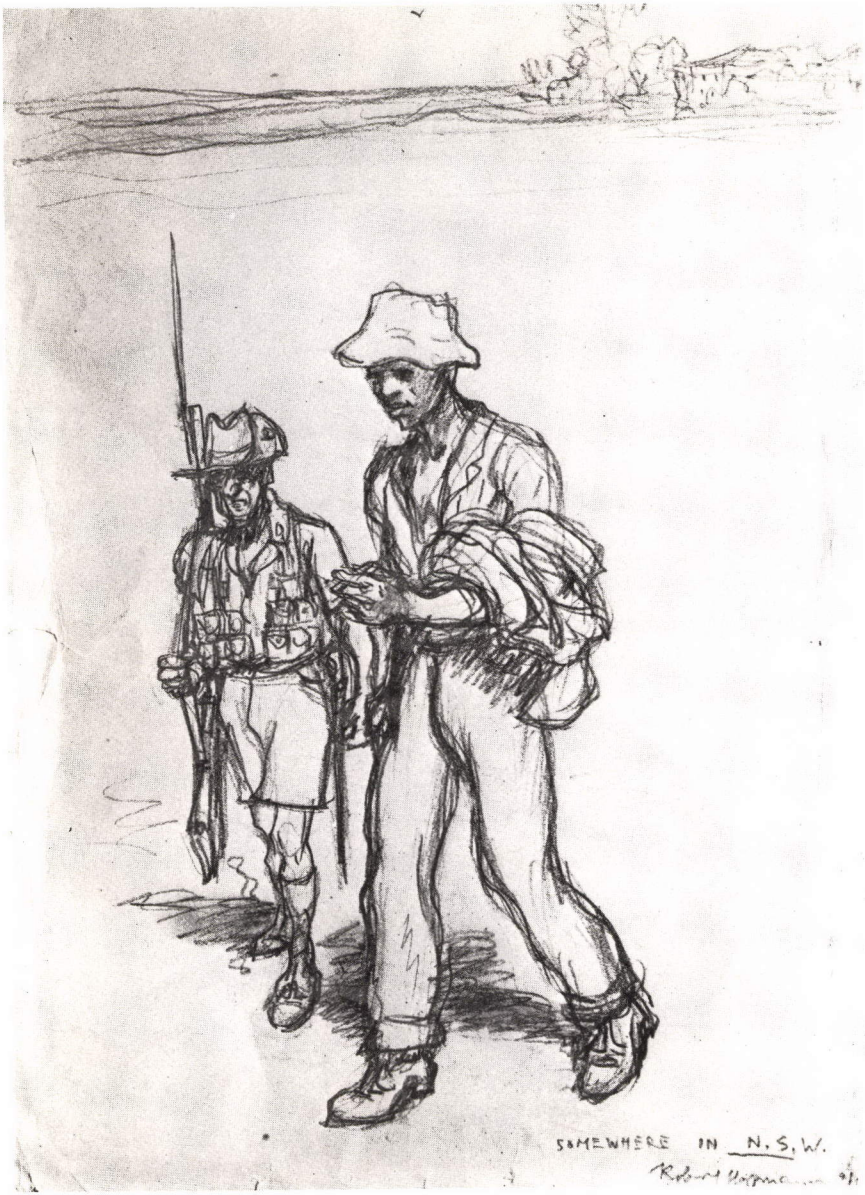
'You Damnd Hitler Spy'. The Dunera*'s captain once threatened to hang Rabbi Ehrentreu by his beard and then throw him overboard.*



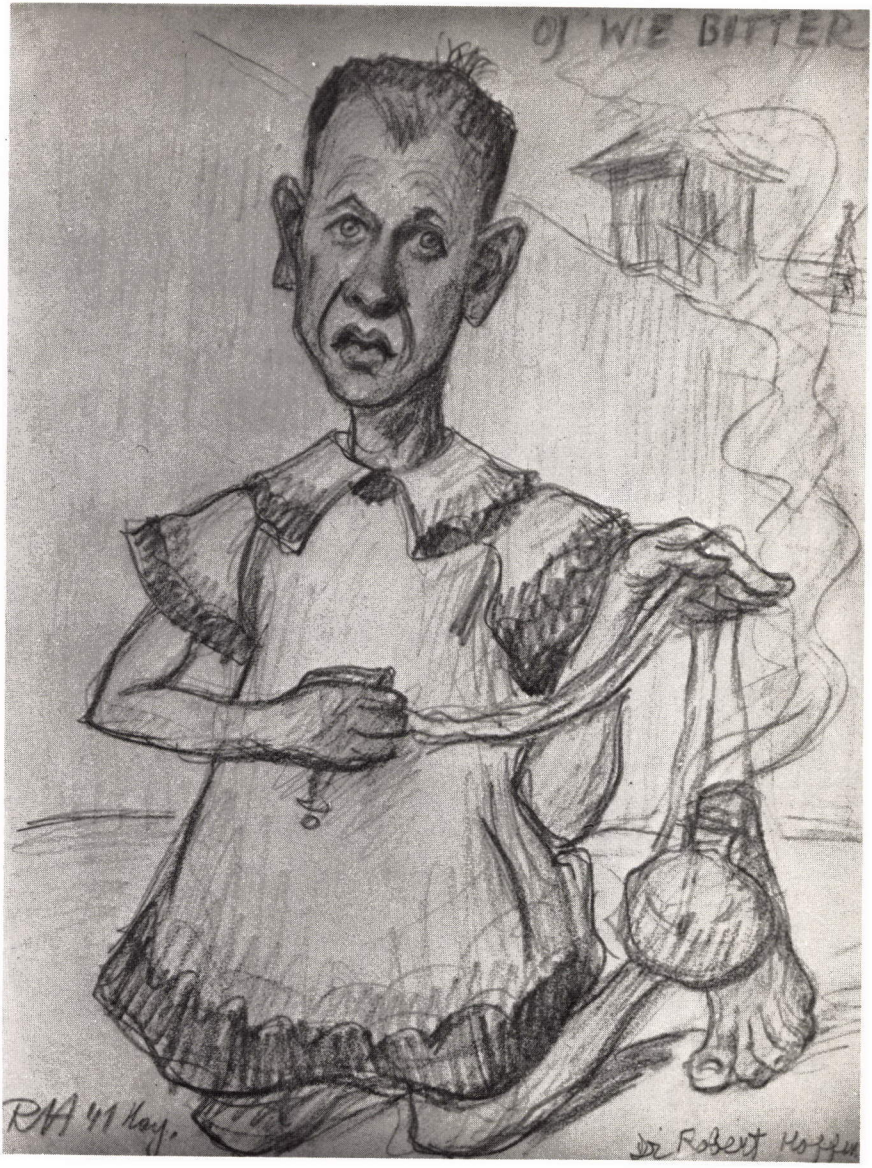
Discussing 'current politics' at Hay, 1941. Painting by Theodor Engel.



Poster for We Travel Round the World — a Revue Without a Girl *by Ernst and Robert Mass with music by Hans Werner Katz.*



An internee at Hay, accompanied by an armed guard, on the way to work. Drawing by Robert Hoffmann.



'How bitter everything is.' Drawing by Robert Hoffmann.

(4)

INSTRUCTIONS

Acquiring Place of Abode.—An alien who arrives in Australia from overseas and who acquires a place of abode must, within seven days after so acquiring a place of abode, give notice thereof, in the prescribed form, to the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his place of abode.

Change of Abode.—An alien, before changing his place of abode, is required to give notice in the prescribed form to the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his place of abode, of the date on which he intends to change his abode, and of his intended new place of abode. He is also required, within seven days after acquiring his new place of abode, to attend in person before the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his new place of abode and to bring with him his Certificate of Registration.

If an alien does not change his place of abode in accordance with the particulars stated in the notice furnished by him, he must forthwith inform the officer of the cancellation of his intended change of abode, or of any alteration in the intended date of his change of abode, or in his intended new place of residence, as the case may be.

Change of Name.—An alien may not change his name unless he has, in accordance with the Regulations, previously notified his intention so to do to the Aliens Registration Officer at the Police Station nearest to his place of abode.

NOTE.—Failure to observe the abovementioned requirements renders an alien liable to a penalty of £100 or six months' imprisonment.

"Truth" and "Sportsman"

No. E 24825 (1) V 37134

Form B1. (A)

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF ~~ALIEN~~ Internee

~~[redacted]~~ 675722

(For alien resident in Australia and for alien passenger entering Australia in Oversea Vessel or Aircraft.)

Name of holder JEIDELS, Harry

Nationality claimed German

Date of birth 22.4.1905.

Occupation Photographer, Bakelite Moulder

Date of entry into Australia 26 AUG 1940

In case of resident aliens, state present address—

Place of abode

In case of Passenger entering Australia, state former address abroad—

Place of abode

In case of alien Passenger only—

Name of vessel or aircraft SS "Dunera"

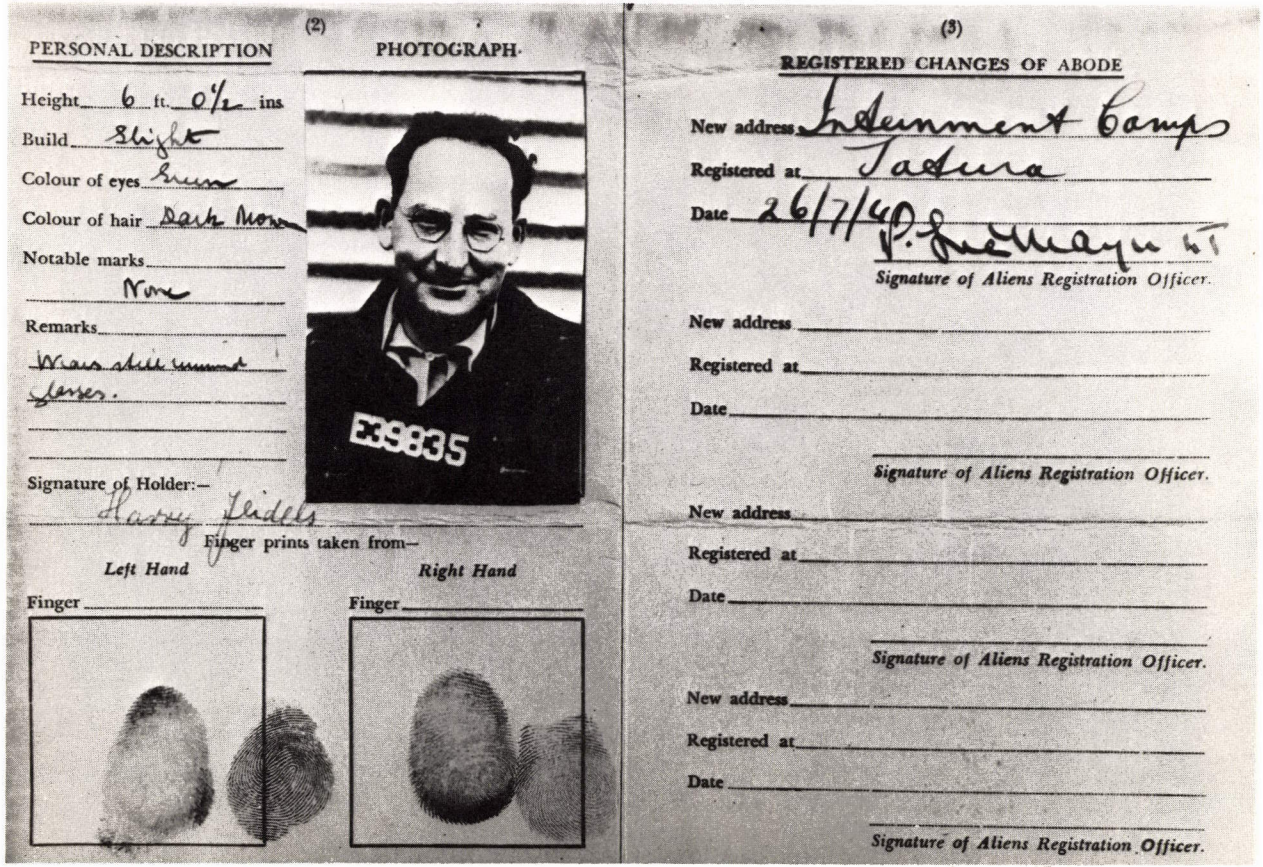
Port at which embarked Liverpool

Intended place of abode (if any) in Australia

Date of issue 26 AUG 1940

Police Station or port Fremantle

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer [signature]


(2)

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

PHOTOGRAPH

Height 6 ft. 0½ ins.

Build Slight

Colour of eyes Brown

Colour of hair Dark Brown

Notable marks None

Remarks Was still unmarried. Loaves.

Signature of Holder:— Harry Jeidels

E39835

Finger prints taken from—

Left Hand

Finger

Right Hand

Finger

(3)

REGISTERED CHANGES OF ABODE

New address Internment Camps

Registered at Tatura

Date 26/7/40 P. McMahon A.I.

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

New address

Registered at

Date

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

New address

Registered at

Date

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

New address

Registered at

Date

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer.

Certificate of Registration of Internee, issued to Harry Jeidels on arrival in Australia.



Money issued at Hay and Tatura

pushed down into the belly of the ship, soldiers stood on both sides of the gangway and cleared our pockets of everything there was—watches, money, pens, amulets—and transferred them into their own pockets. Whatever they did not want, they threw on the floor or overboard.

'Pitiful and dejected lay heaps of so many beautiful ornaments and dignified religious and other objects. Tallitoth (prayer shawls) Phylacteries (in which scrolls are arranged in the order as prescribed by Rabbenu Tam, to be used for morning prayers on weekdays), various documents, even bread, soap, and similar articles. One of the prayer books remained defiantly standing when thrown on the heap, then swayed sideways as if ashamed and fell on its side. It remained still, dying.

'An elderly soldier with a big round belly stood still, like a statue fastened to the floor, smiling under his moustache and seemed to be very pleased with himself. Mockery and irony cried out to heaven . . .

'I remembered a story about a Jewish ritual slaughterman (one who kills animals for Kasher food according to Jewish law; he is called a Shohet), who travelled to Germany to take up a position of Shohet in a Jewish community there. When he arrived at the border he realized he could not remember what he had to do first. To examine the animal and then slaughter it or vice-versa. Suddenly, he heard a woman screaming at the top of her voice: "They killed me! They killed me! What shall I do?"

'The Shohet asked the woman whether they first killed her and checked or examined her afterwards. "Of course they examined me first", the women replied, "otherwise, I wouldn't have cried." What in fact happened, the woman was robbed of her money. The Shohet then remembered and repeated many times: "First examine and check and then kill".

'As we were pushed down, we were clubbed with the rifles and when a man slipped and fell, those who followed fell over him. On the deck below, other soldiers with rifles "on the ready" hurried us still more. The sergeant swung his big stock as if to kill an ox. It was deliberate sadistic brutality.

'It became terribly congested. Although we wanted to obey orders we did not know what to do. The stick in the sergeant's hand was revolving with the swiftness of a windmill. We were pushed further like frightened cattle. Detached and apathetic, we encountered walls, tables, and benches. We stopped caring as to what will come next. Even the sergeant's beatings didn't frighten us any more. Finally we stopped moving as there was nowhere to move further.

'We became physically and mentally sick. "What is the use to fight for survival?" many of us asked. Our wives and children, our families

are scattered the world over. Many, very many, of them remained in Germany. Our last hope—the immigration papers to America, Brazil, Africa, Australia, Eretz Israel and other places, were torn, lost, and thrown overboard.

'But the storm subsided and everyone of the over 2 000 refugees on board the ship found a little corner, a small space on the floor, on a table or on a bench. Human nature dictated the human body and mind to fight for life, for survival. The many [interned] doctors from Germany made an alliance with nature and began to work on us.

'The doctors tried to explain to us that despair and apathy are the worst enemies of human life. When a man does not react with force against powers set to destroy him, something must be wrong with the man. The doctors decided to treat every case individually. With German punctuality, they approached each case not with medical but with psychological methods. At first they endeavoured to use influence or persuasion: "Don't be a fool, the world did not stop existing and so long as a man lives he must hope for a better tomorrow!"

'When this soft method did not help, the doctors tried to be angry and rigid. "Do you think", they used to say to a man, "you are the only sufferer and the only one who is worried about his family?" or, "Are you the only one inside this madhouse?" But when this approach did not help, Dr K from the Kashruth commission used to put his hand on the man's arm and with a good-natured smile on his face tell him an anecdote, to make him smile also. The doctors later declared that the main reason for them taking immediate precautions with many individuals who seemed to be mentally affected by the unfortunate events was because they were afraid of an outbreak of a mass psychosis which could entangle hundreds of inmates. In particular, such mass psychosis could affect the people when passing through the tropics. .

'A middle-aged Jew, his face yellow as a parchment, sat on a neatly folded overcoat, deep under the stairs, his trembling bony hands pressed to his heart, and laughed. It was such terrifying, loud laughter that all men around trembled with fear. Suddenly he stopped laughing and it became as still as at midnight in a cemetery.

'Several doctors stood around the man, each trying to do something for him. One checked the pulse. Another held his head. The Kashruth Dr K was telling him an anecdote . . . One other doctor spoke in a high voice and abused him. The sick man, however, dispassionate and unconcerned, sat on his overcoat, staring at the ceiling, his long bony hands still on his heart, and once again started laughing. There was something devilish in his laughter.

'Suddenly he stopped laughing, put his hands on his face and began crying almost bitterly. The doctors around him held a quiet, speedy

consultation and decided to leave him alone for a while. The crying may help him to get better. The crying lasted a while which for all of us seemed to be like eternity. Nobody dared utter a sound. Everything was happening so suddenly and with such speed that none of us could in fact comprehend the actual facts. The eyes of many of us were wet with tears. Somehow we felt ashamed . . .

'The man said something. A doctor standing near him asked "What did you say?" The doctor requested to bring him some water immediately. But where to get the water from? No water anywhere on the lower deck. We could not go upstairs as the soldier with the rifle on his arm watched every movement anyone made.

'"What did you say?" the doctor asked the man again. "We want to help you", the doctor continued, "you will feel better if you will speak to us." But the man did not answer. Instead he took his hands off his face. He stopped crying and the expression on his face suddenly looked very normal.

'Abruptly, as if an idea was born in his mind, he unbound his right shoe, took off his sock, jumped up from the floor and called out softly: "Here it is". Then with despair in his eyes, be began screaming at the top of his voice like a wounded animal.

'We all looked at each other whilst the doctor quietly asked the sick man, caressing him softly so that even a heart of stone could melt: "Tell us, what have you got?" The sick man did not answer. He swayed his naked foot from side to side backwards and forwards until something heavy fell out from inside the leg of his trousers and fell with a knock onto the floor.

'The old doctor lifted the small parcel, wrapped in an old newspaper, opened it and brought out a small part of a brick, the size of a walnut. "What is it" asked the doctor again, "tell us."

'At last the sick man began to talk. Each word sounded strange as it came out of his mouth. It seemed as if the man's words were stuck to his tongue and had to be torn off from it. "Everything . . . is gone . . . lost . . . the wife, the child, the home: but the concentration camp . . . the torture . . . Dachau. Do you still remember Dachau . . . the SS . . . beasts and murderers . . . the Nazis . . . heart failures".

'Unexpectedly, he calmed down. The tears were seen in his eyes and on his face, but the words stuck in his throat. "Now then", the old doctor said softly to the man, "we are all in the same boat. I suffered not less, maybe even more. But what do you want to do with this little stone?" And he held it out to the man.

'"Now, today . . ." (the sick man uttered the words with great effort), "on this ship . . . the robbers . . . the gangsters . . . took everything, the wedding ring . . . a small golden chain of my dead wife . . . of my child who is dead too."

'"But what is the meaning of the stone?" persisted the Dr K from the orthodox-religious group, as if to distract the man from his sad and bitter memories.

'"Ah, the stone, yes . . . the stone . . .", the man said. "Do you remember . . . the ninth of November? . . . then, the Nazis destroyed, annihilated, burnt, everything . . . the synagogues, also ours; blasted with dynamite . . . My father, my grandfather, my great grandfather, all prayed there . . . it is no more . . . everything has gone . . . only this little stone . . . When the walls fell, nothing else remained. Only this little stone was saved from the destruction . . . a little stone taken by me . . . from our old Synagogue."

'All of us lowered our heads and wept bitterly.'

At a time which cannot be precisely defined, the inmates realized that the *Dunera* was not moving west across the Atlantic but that its course was set in a southerly direction. Internees who had studied geography, and ex-boy scouts who could navigate by the stars, made the deductions. That the destination of the ship was Australia was afterwards officially announced to the internees over a loudspeaker system. Much later Professor Hugo Wolfsohn described this news as 'the worst moment of my life'. Moving into tropical waters confirmed the news. Days were warmer but the nights were cooler. Sea-water showers were the only relief from the day's heat. The regime on board became less rigid and oppressive as the *Dunera* left behind the U-boat danger areas.

Kurt Fischer 'But one peril gone, we were soon to face another. A thick-set sergeant accompanied by two soldiers used to come to our part of the ship. At all times he carried his rifle in his right hand, horizontally, as if readying himself to attack an enemy or on the hunt for wild animals. He looked around and, at times, bent down over some of the men who were lying on the floor. He always made his rounds in this manner and then disappeared, together with his escorts. He was nicknamed "the lion hunter" but he was only hunting for gold—watches and rings—which he could take away from the internees and put in his own pockets.

'As the days went by and we were out of what we thought the danger zone, we were allowed some free movement on the boat. Likewise, sanitary crews were organized and whilst the lower decks were being cleaned, the internees were ordered on to the top decks. What a wonderful thing fresh sea air could be! But apparently, the little comfort we derived from it was too much of an annoyance to the military guards. They ordered us to take our shoes off and jog past the machine guns which were pointed at us from all directions with

soldiers manning each one of them. Moreover, doubtless lacking some entertainment, the guards amused themselves by throwing empty bottles or empty tins at us. Naturally, the numerous hits produced some sores and slight injuries which, at certain times of the day, could be attended by the doctor or the medical orderlies. Although the jogging only lasted about twenty minutes, whoever could avoid it, did so.'

Asher Joseph 'The officers and soldiers who guarded us on the ship were mainly those who had escaped from France to England by way of Dunkirk. They were most embittered. At times I thought that they blamed us for their misfortunes, and were taking revenge on us. They did not hesitate to tell us. "If you are Nazis, you should be gaoled, and more so if you are Jews and other German citizens who have betrayed their country". The tragic paradox of the situation was that while the Nazis were aiming to exterminate us because we were Jews, the British deported us as enemy aliens and potential fifth-columnists, using ships urgently needed to transport food, men and munitions from America and the British Dominions to the United Kingdom. Instead of mobilizing us to participate in the war effort against the Nazis, we were guarded by soldiers needed to guard the shores of the British Isles. How could any intelligent man reconcile such a situation?

'Apart from the daily short runs around the top deck, we spent all day and night on the filthy and sickening lower decks, often vomiting the little food we had. The strictly observant Jews could not eat the Treifa (prepared not in accordance with Jewish dietary laws), and the only food considered Kasher consisted of dried vegetables, onions and whatever fruit was available. Ship's biscuits and other selected non-Kasher foods were eaten only by internees who were very ill. We also lacked many religious objects because when the guards pilfered our luggage and confiscated personal items, they threw overboard most of the prayer books, tefillin (phylacteries) and tallitot (praying shawls).

'But we had amongst us a substantial number of very learned men and outstanding spiritual leaders. It was a great relief, mentally and spiritually, to be in their midst and listen to them expounding various portions of the Tanakh (Bible), Mishnah or the Gemarah (Talmud). Unfortunately, almost all the books we had when we came aboard the ship were grabbed by the military guards and thrown overboard. Therefore, studies attended by the religious Jews and others were conducted from memory. Some men, however, had managed to save a little book or a number of pages from a book and these often served as a basis for further tuition and discussions. Efforts to conduct studies under such conditions were often beyond natural endurance.

However, a few pairs of tefillin which had survived served hundreds of Jews aboard the *Dunera*.'

The orthodox religious Jews on the *Dunera* were led by Rabbi Dr E. Ehrentreu, former Chief Rabbi of Munich. He was assisted by Elhanan Loebenstein, who came from an observant religious Jewish family in Hamburg. Loebenstein and his entire family migrated to England in 1939 *en route* to the Caribbean Dutch colony of Curacao, where they expected to take up the positions of *Shehitah* (the Jewish method of slaughtering) and *Mohel* (one who performs circumcision). Elhanan Loebenstein and one of his brothers were interned at the outbreak of war and both ended up on the *Dunera*. There they found a number of old friends and new who formed a distinct orthodox Jewish group. Rabbi Ehrentreu was their spokesman and the authority on the question of what little food available could be considered Kasher. For example, he expressed the view that bread baked on the ship in tins smeared with lard could be Kasher if the crust was removed. Most of the orthodox group, except those who were very ill, survived on sago and one fresh apple a week. But Rabbi Ehrentreu apparently made too many 'demands' of a religious nature on the ship's authorities. The Captain once threatened to hang him by his beard from the ship's mast and then throw him overboard. In view of the ordinary internees' treatment by the soldiers, this threat was not taken as a joke. The military commanding officer, the RSM and a sergeant were court-martialled in mid-1941.

Hans Hammerstein 'Even in all the humiliation and depression, we made every effort to maintain order and remain civilized, not demoralized. I remember an exercise I shared with a friend, in order to develop our memory. By accident we found an old and uninteresting book which one of the sailors or guards on the *Dunera* had apparently thrown away. We learned whole pages by heart.

'Having learned that the *Dunera* was sailing to Australia and not to Canada, we realized that we would have much time on our hands. We therefore organized a whole series of lectures, debates, community singing, religious services, Hebrew language studies and other similar activities, the standard of which was high because we had most talented men to instruct and conduct such activities. For example, we had interesting talks on modern shipbuilding by an executive member of a large German shipbuilding firm, Walter Heine; Hein Heckroth, a leading surrealist and theatre designer for the Ballet Jooss, delivered lectures on modern painting; Fr Walter Konig, the Catholic priest, spoke on Goethe's *Faust*. The well-known author

and lecturer Ulmann spoke on Spengler's *Decline of the West.* The anthropologist Adam lectured on "primitive society". A former industrialist spoke on "secret weapons" in the present war. Another internee, who had spent two years in Nigeria, spoke about "life in the tropics on the west coast of Africa".

'Orthodox Jews conducted Friday evening and Saturday morning services on deck No 4 and Liberal Jews had their services on deck No 3. The Christians, the greatest majority of whom were baptised Jews, had their services on Sundays. How strange it was to see these dark-haired men on whose faces you could easily see and read the inscription which no one could erase—"I was born a Jew and am a son of a Jewish mother and a Jewish father"—but saying aloud, "Jesus Christ my Saviour". Many of these baptised Jews, who were convinced they would be saved by baptism, by running away from their people and from themselves, did not feel at all comfortable being close neighbours and partners in tragedy common to all of us, although not one of us ever reprimanded or molested them in any way whatsoever. We simply pitied them and lamented their lack of character.

'One of the most unfortunate experiences on the *Dunera* was the near lack of medical provisions. I would never have believed it if I had not experienced it myself and seen it with my own eyes. To the best of my knowledge, there was only one ship's doctor, very few sanitary orderlies, and hardly any medical supplies. One day I myself became ill and after standing for a long time in a long queue, together with other sick men, I finally approached the doctor who ordered me to open my mouth, whereupon the sanitary orderly emptied into it a spoonful of some liquid. I noticed that the same liquid from the same bottle was the only "medicine" given to every sick man in the queue. The spoon was never washed or even wiped after each patient.

'No questions were asked and no answers given as to sickness or anything pertaining to it. But the doctor apparently saw I was running a high temperature and ordered me to be taken into the ship's hospital. It was so small that there was hardly room to walk between the beds, or even to lie down on a mat or a blanket on the floor. Having no other alternative, I pushed myself under one of the beds which was occupied by a much younger man. He recognized me as his former teacher in the Berlin school, and insisted that I should change places with him.

'As the *Dunera* was moving along, we had ample opportunity to learn much about our guards and their commanders. Our spokesman, Dr Eichenberg, reminded the Commander that when we came aboard the ship we were robbed by the guards of almost everything we had. The Commander replied that plundering the

prisoners was a usual procedure amongst soldiers and that he did not think it could be abolished. Dr Eichenberg then stated that he spoke in the name of the civilian internees, who had originally found refuge in England and it was only due to the unfortunate circumstances that they were interned. The civilian internees are in a completely different category from prisoners-of-war, said Dr Eichenberg. The Commander replied that he did not think anyone could expect soldiers to distinguish so accurately. "Those men", he said, "have fought the Germans at Dunkirk and are irate. An officer has a delicate position to keep these men in good spirits whilst we are all on the high seas for many weeks."

'The soldier-guards, moreover, turned into shameless bandits. At Freetown, in Sierra Leone, our first short anchorage since we left England, the soldiers took out from our suitcases whatever articles were still left and sold them at the market. And as if this was not enough, they took many of the suitcases to town and sold these too. Dr Eichenberg, our spokesman, wanted to speak once again to the Commander but he could not get admission to his cabin. We were now convinced that we were amongst pirates—if the soldiers saw a ring or a watch still available, they simply took it. This taught us to become even more cunning in trying to hide any tiny property we still possessed.

'It was natural that many of our discussions centred around the piratical behaviour of the soldier-guards. The communists who were not Jews tried to "prove" the rottenness of bourgeois society. They tried to convince us that we were naive and that we would have to stop being so. It was at this time that something unbelievable happened. The Commander told Dr Eichenberg that he could not restrain his men any further and, as they intended to continue plundering the inmates, he (the Commander) suggested that any prisoner-refugee who still had anything of value which he wished to save, should wrap the article in a piece of paper and write his name on it, and that all packets should be put into a large bag to be brought to him personally.

'The officer gave his word of honour to return our belongings before our arrival in Australia. The communists in our midst burst into laughter. "His officer's word!" they scoffed. "Has he a head or stomach different from his soldier-bandits? You poor petty bourgeois believe it."

'Our thoughts were different. We believed the officer, and not because we had no further choice. We put everything we still had in a bag. On the following day, we were ordered to strip completely except for short pants and then come on to the upper deck. After being there about twenty minutes, we were ordered to return to our quarters. Lo

and behold! Unless we had seen the results with our own eyes, none of us would ever have believed that such behaviour by civilized people was possible. All our clothing was strewn around and about everywhere. The linings had been torn out from coats, jackets and trousers, and whatever was found in them, whether a pen or a coin or even a photograph, had been taken by our "guardians". Moreover, the guardians were ill-tempered and angry at the fact that not much of value was found in the clothing and, as an act of revenge, also to mark their disappointment, they pushed and jolted us and tried to annoy and provoke us to counteract in some way.

'One of my friends, Bruno Simon, the well-known sculptor, showed me a bayonet stab in his side. Later, whilst still at sea and not far from Australia, Eichenberg called on the commander of the guards to request the return of his bag, but he himself failed to return. Rumour went round that Eichenberg was arrested and confined to the ship's prison for the rest of the voyage because he was alleged to have used "disrespectful language" when speaking to the officer.'

Kurt Fischer 'Meanwhile, for some unknown reason, we on one of the lower decks were given the opportunity to sit near the big square openings along one of the long corridors and enjoy the fresh sea air and watch the waves beat against the side of the ship. We were also permitted to visit people in other parts of the ship. On one of the lower decks I came into contact with some of the other Jews and I also saw there German soldiers and sailors, prisoners-of-war, who just looked at us but said nothing. They knew we were Jews and although many of the prisoners-of-war were Nazis, they avoided quarrels and confrontations. The reason was obvious. They could not understand why we, the Jews, were treated by the English in the same manner as their prisoners.

'At last we arrived at the harbour of Freetown in Sierra Leone, where the ship berthed for a while. It was a relief to see land with buildings on it and people moving around. A negro wearing a bright green pullover or shirt and black shorts rowed his small canoe so near the ship that it almost touched its side. Neither I nor any of the others who watched the negro rowing could understand why he continually winked to us. A few days later the *Dunera* cast anchor in the harbour of Secondi-Takoradi on the Gold Coast. Just as it was pleasant to see the negro boy rowing his canoe and winking at us, so it was refreshing to observe the large stores, flanked by palm trees, with barefooted negro policemen wearing white uniforms, although the beach itself was desolate. Next day the *Dunera* was again riding the waves of the oceanic desert. The negro boy, the brightly uniformed negro policeman, the palm trees, all these were like a dream, their places being taken by the British guards and the "lion hunter" sergeant.'

During the two months at sea, three internees died. One who was said to have been ill when he boarded the *Dunera* at Liverpool, died in the ship's hospital. Another died as a result of an injury sustained in a brawl over a quantity of prunes. A third inmate, Weiss, committed suicide because of frustration and loss of faith in human nature. What in fact happened was this: after running around for over twelve months and having at last succeeded in obtaining immigration documents to another country for himself and his family, whom he still hoped to save from the Nazis' claws in Germany, he was arrested, interned, and subsequently taken aboard the *Dunera*. The soldiers on the ship found the immigration papers on him, and tore them up, along with other documents, in front of his eyes. For many days he was completely apathetic to everything and everyone around him. Then one day, during the usual "exercise" period, he jumped overboard and drowned. It was indeed a miracle that the number of lives lost during the voyage was so small. Perhaps it was the will to live and the ever-eternal hope of the better "tomorrow" that enabled two thousand or more Jews to survive the hellish voyage.

Kurt Fischer 'At long last we could see the famous landmark of Table Mountain on the horizon and, as we sailed nearer, the city itself beneath it. After the many weeks of physical and mental darkness which had surrounded us it was an elating experience to watch the mountain gilded by the setting sun and later, at night, illuminated by thousands of lights. For me and, I am sure, for many others, the view was a reminder of our school days—of the geography text-book and its illustration depicting what we now saw in its natural beauty.

'But the ecstasy was short-lived. Once again we faced reality. I was sitting on my bench in the Sergeants' Mess when the "lion-hunter", together with several soldiers, suddenly appeared as from nowhere. I noticed they were escorting a man whose hands were tied and who was wearing a torn and dirty uniform of an English soldier and, as they neared the stairs, they simply dragged him down. Then we could hear the terrible sound of the whiplash, accompanied by the agonizing screams of a tortured human being, which reminded us of Buchenwald where people received twenty-five lashes for quite minor transgressions. We learned later that the man involved in the episode was a prisoner-of-war who had hoped to escape by wearing an old English uniform.

'After two days in Cape Town harbour the *Dunera* continued its journey. The weather was beautiful, the sea was calm and we all felt restful and contented. A few days later, however, the temperature dropped sharply, a strong wind blew up, the sea became rough, and the ship rolled as if it was a little canoe. We could hear the huge waves

beating against the sides of the *Dunera*, some of the impacts reminding us of exploding grenades. During the night the ship rolled more violently than ever before and many of us were terribly sea-sick. The confusion of mind and general depression which seemed to have disappeared before the storm, soon returned.

'I had a bad headache and the air on our deck was fetid. Although I was very cold, I went out into the corridor to get a bit of fresh air and exercise. At the other end of the corridor was a soldier who apparently, like myself, wanted some fresh air. As I marched up and down the corridor, he came up to me and asked me what I was doing there. I replied that I did not feel well and thought a bit of fresh air would help me get better. The soldier replied, "it is forbidden to stay here, return to your deck at once".

'I obeyed the order, went back to my bunk and, after turning over from side to side many times, finally fell asleep. I don't know how long I had slept before I was thrown from the bunk together with all by belongings, but fortunately I was able to stop myself from hitting the table with full force. All hammocks with inmates in them were swinging from side to side and many of the people in them were falling. Those who had slept on tables had slipped off them like big fish from a wet timber platform standing at 45 degrees or more. As soon as I got up on my feet, I was tossed back to the wall from which I had just been thrown. At the same time, we could hear, at short intervals, something like rolling sounds followed by high seas beating against the iron sides of the ship. The sounds as if grenades were exploding resumed, and from time to time the noise of breaking glass could also be heard.

'We soon learned that the kitchen had become flooded. Sleep was out of the question. We sat on the floor and on benches, stunned and perplexed, in poor light and breathing foul air. Gradually, the storm abated the sea became calmer and the *Dunera* followed its course at a much slower speed because one of its motors was badly damaged and out of action. We were again allowed to come out on the upper deck and resume our exercise. It was then that a fellow internee, in a severe fit of depression and despair, fell overboard and disappeared in the huge ocean.

'From Cape Town, the *Dunera* was sailing directly eastward, and every day we adjusted our watches (or rather, the few did who still had them, following the robberies by the guards). There were also other signs that we were coming nearer to Australia. Since we left England, none of us had been able to have a shave or a haircut because no one was allowed to keep a razor or scissors. Now we were ordered to appear on the foredeck, where several barbers were operating to make the inmates on the ship somewhat "presentable".

But the happiest moment was when the *Dunera* docked at Fremantle, in Western Australia, and a group of Australian officers came aboard. A representative group lost no time in approaching the Australian officers in order to register a protest on behalf of the Kitchener Camp inmates at the treatment we had received.'

Hans Hammerstein 'As we were nearing Australia our deck leader, von Zitzewitz, had several "friendly" discussions with the Commander and, as a result, was finally able to inform us that the Commander had agreed to our request not to be housed in the same camp with the German Nazis and the Italian Fascists when we finally arrived in Australia. We were also informed that the civilian non-Jewish internees wished to be with us, and not with the Germans or Italians. It so happened that the latter were taken off the ship in Melbourne, while all the others continued their journey to Sydney.

'Our spirits began to rise. Suddenly the sky began to look really blue and the waters of the ocean not as grey as they were "yesterday". Smiles began to appear on the gloomy faces of the internees. Rumours circulated (no one could say where they originated) that on landing at the next Australian port, we would be set free. There would be no more internment camps, as the Australians are completely different from the English, and Australia needs more workers. Therefore all kinds of jobs would be waiting for us. At the same time, we were allowed to go on the upper decks and walk around the ship quite freely. As the *Dunera* slowly sailed through the harbour towards its berth, we could see beautiful gardens and private homes and, we thought, Government buildings. Perhaps we had to go through all the hell in order to come to this lovely country and begin a new and happy life.'

It was remarkable that from amongst those who wrote or spoke of travelling together on the *Dunera*, the only one who mentioned being able to buy something from the ship's canteen, was Robert Kahn, at that time 17 years of age. 'I left England in the clothes I stood up in,' he recollects, 'but with one pound in cash which I had saved in the course of half a year's work in England, by walking to and from work instead of riding on a bus. I managed to hide these savings from the guards by rolling the coins up in the cuffs of my trousers. During the voyage I spent that money on a toothbrush and dentifrice, also on small bars of chocolate, bought through a clandestine black-market channel which reached the ship's canteen via the cooks.'

Felix Werder 'Only the non-creative indulge in reminiscences. Thoughts of the past recollected in tranquillity become varnished, as Alexander Pushkin writes, "Whereto, whereto did you flee, Oh

springtide of my youth". Well, mine was spent on a little boat, the *Dunera*, and later in an internment camp. In short—in the true traditional way Australians are made. It was all very unpleasant, possibly unjust, even unethical, but by comparison not half as bad as being in a concentration camp, being bombed out, or dying on the Stalingrad front of frost-bite. I have learned long ago from Leibnitz, who learned it from his cat, to curl up in a corner and consider this the best of all possible worlds. One learns a lot from a "*Dunera* situation", about one's fellow man, about their stupidity, about how naked they are when divested of their clothes and they frantically try to cover their shame with doctorates and other absurd titles. How they conform like sheep, how quickly they become a mob, how soon they become victims of a milieu and how quickly they obey blind authority rather than reason. Bertrand Russell speaks of reciprocal causation in men's existence; "the circumstances of men's lives do much to determine their philosophy, but conversely, their philosophy does much to determine their circumstances".

'So it was on the *Dunera*. After we had been fleeced of everything and herded into a small mess-area on board this British "pick-pocket-battle-ship", we compared our contraband, which like all cultured ones, had to be smuggled past the Philistines. My father had managed to conceal a small copy of Goethe's *Faust* and his prized possession, his security-symbol, a small tuning fork; and I had my bible, Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Others more fortunate did not need these physical props but carried their inheritance in their brains; the more unfortunate ones lost their watches and their rings and their gold, and were left for the rest of their lives with nothing. I well remember these votaries of Mammon and their subsequent moral collapse. It was a salutary lesson.

'The recuperative ability of the human spirit is amazing, particularly when there is some intellectual fibre to sustain it. Very soon we had a sort of rudimentary lecture situation in which anyone who knew anything collected an admiring throng of Hassidim (devoted adherents). The spectrum of intellectual activity ranged from the sex life of the may-beetle to the mayhem of the six lives of Ormutz. Of course, there were charlatans, intellectual buffoons, fossilized academics and cerebral ego-trippers. But, so what! Even that is better than to abandon dignity. There was a Dr B, who let it be known that he would give a lecture and when asked on what topic, replied 'What would you like to learn?' There was a Mr F, a somewhat aged authority on sexual practices in the back streets of Vienna, who regaled the young with lecherous reminiscences. There was a Doctor of Divinity, one Dr R, who, as naked as Adam, sported an Iron Cross in lieu of a fig leaf, as he thundered his Jeremiah-like sermons. But

these were minor aberrations, and looking back on the lectures given by Professor C on the philosophy of history; by Maestro S on the influence of C. P. E. Bach on Beethoven; by Dr H on Deutero-Isaiah; and Professor T on the Caro-Can defence, I doubt whether any university could have matched the performance. As for myself, having just been torn from the sheltered bosom of an English tertiary education, I found myself much in demand as a lecturer, not, I suspect, because of any great news I had to impart but because I was one of the few who could converse in English. In fact, later during the internment, I became a quasi-secretary to several camp-leaders.

'There is no end of human ingenuity under stress. I found the Chess Club particularly appealing. Our diet consisted of kippers and inedible bread which we promptly kneaded into chess pieces and within days we had a flourishing tournament under way. My father organized a choir. The problem of music manuscript, or lack of it, was overcome by composing material on toilet paper. Both my father's and my memories were severely taxed to come up with bits and pieces from the classics. This resulted at times in the most extraordinary truncated versions of items from Handel's "Judas" and Mozart's "G Major Mass", supplemented by original pastiches from yours truly. We wrote a lot of music in those months and never has the lowly toilet paper been so cherished as it was in those days.

'As I was very interested in those days in Zarathustra and the original Zend-Avesta, I wrote a small thesis on the origins of much Hebraic literature. Of course, the poem "Akdamut Millin", in particular, fascinated me.[1]

'I made the first sketches to my tone poem by that name, on the *Dunera*, which was performed with much success some years later by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with Sir Eugene Goossens as conductor. I suppose, for myself and many of the other young people, it was a sort of adventure. Certainly for me it proved a valuable lesson on the realities of life, men's adaptability under stress and the need to build on one's own abilities. In short, Schopenhauer's lesson to take pride in what one is, rather than in what one possesses, or what one represents.

'As time passes and the *Dunera* event disappears into history, I am left a little wiser, a sadder man to realize that nobody ever learns anything from history. The same bourgeois idiots worship the same values as they did then. They build their swimming pools in gold as they dance round the calf of their ignorance. The only people who learned from the *Dunera* were the ones who did not need the lesson in the first place. The Greeks are wrong after all. Aeschylus teaches that

1 A poem written by Rabbi Meir Ben Isaac Nehorai recited as part of the synagogue service on *Shavuot*, Festival of Weeks.

man must suffer to be wise. He is utterly wrong. Koheleth (Ecclesiastes) is right when he says, "The wiser you are, the more worries you have".'

The *Dunera* reached Sydney Harbour on 7 September 1940. While its cargo of internees suffered that eight-week voyage from Liverpool—a voyage with parallels in the case of other groups shipped to Canada—a British political controversy about their fate developed. Francois Lafitte was the most outstanding campaigner for the rights of refugees who had been overwhelmingly misclassified, interned and deported. His Penguin Special *The Internment of Aliens* was printed and published about the time the *Dunera* group reached Sydney. He dedicated his book to the new Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, Herbert Morrison, 'in the hope that he will succeed where his predecessor Sir John Anderson has failed'. The *Dunera* internees came to know of his book by rumour, and in January and February 1941, copies reached their camp at Hay where group readings were organized.

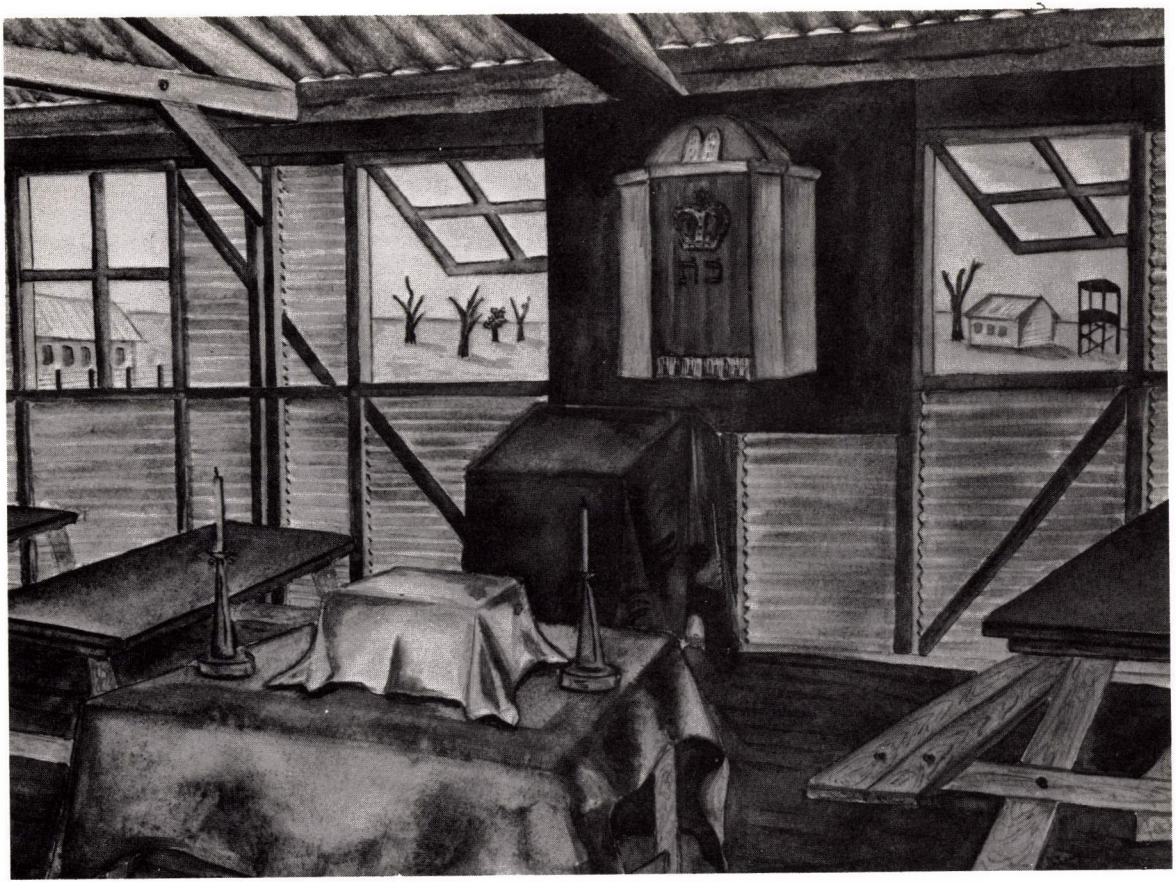
Lafitte explained the origins of the refugee problem in England and unfavourably compared the English situation with the more generous record of France and Czechoslovakia during the pre-war years. He detailed case after case of refugees with impeccable anti-Nazi credentials whose skills were not used by the British Government. He criticized the 'anti-foreign scare' of May 1940, which led to the policy 'intern the lot', as stupid, self-defeating and authoritarian. Hostility towards, and suspicion of all German-speaking people led to a panic which defeated Britain's own war aims. Lafitte believed the internment policy represented a subtle British version of 'one odious Nazi doctrine—the doctrine of the eternal alien', and he concluded his book with a programme for the release, provision of useful work, and legal protection of refugees interned in Britain and the Dominions of Canada and Australia.

The agitations in England for the rights of wrongfully interned refugees began while the *Dunera* was *en route* to Australia, and continued well into 1941. Thousands of internees were released in England, but the *Dunera* internees as a whole were trapped in Australia because, by a legal agreement, they were in the custody of the Australian Government for the duration of the war. Nevertheless, some minor changes in policy, effected by Home Secretary Herbert Morrison, began to affect them. Two parliamentary White Papers admitted that mistakes had been made. The commanding officer, the RSM and a sergeant from the *Dunera* were court-martialled for theft and brutality on the voyage, in June 1941. At the same time, the British Government apologized for the mistaken deportation,

arranged for compensation for confiscated property, and plans were made for the return of selected internees to England pending available passages. In March 1941 a Liaison Officer was stationed in Australia to handle the complaints of internees. But these minor reforms did not begin to affect the *Dunera* internees until after they had endured months of a scorching Australian summer in a camp at barren, isolated Hay.



Caricatures of internees drawn by F. Loewenstein. From left to right, back row: unknown, Martin Brasch, Fritz Hamburger; second row: Paul Oppenheimer, Ernest Seaton, unknown; third row: Egon Loewe, Otto Meyer, unknown; bottom row: unknown, Ignaz Rosenbaum, Dr Beer.





'God punishes us, Brand said, because we ordered so few Mazzoth. *But how is it possible otherwise for such a community as this?' 'Regarding converts.' Cartoon by Robert Hoffmann. Walter Brand was Secretary of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society.*

"Sergeant Snow White"

A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY MUSICAL REVUE OF BAD OLD AND GOOD NEW TIMES
A SERGEANT DOC. K. STERNBERG PRODUCTION.
Union Theatre on May 11th, 12th and 13th, 1943.

Programme

* *

Act 1.
"Snow White"

1. Ouverture

2. Prologue
   Grandma .. .. Pte. J. Feder
   Child .. Pte. L. Oppenheimer

3. The Mirror
   Queen .. .. O. H. MAYER
   Master of the Bedchamber Sgt. S. LOHDE

4 Dairy Wood
   Snow White .. .. Snow White
   Prince Charming Pte. ERIC LIFFMANN
   Long Nose } Wolf } .. .. Pte H. Reiss
   The Witch .. Cpl. A. P. SCHMITZ

5. The Banquet
   Queen .. .. O. H. MAYER
   Master of the Bedchamber Sgt. S. LOHDE
   2 Ambassadors Pte. S. Hochberger
   E. Hutterer
   Wolf .. .. Pte. H. Reiss
   The Witch .. Cpl. A. P. SCHMITZ
   Prince Charming Pte ERIC LIFFMANN
   The King of the Gypsies PAUL STEINER
   Master of the Tappers } Captain of the Guard } Pte. C. Begach
   The Seven Dwarfs The Swing Choir
   The Ballet

INTERVAL

Act 2.
"Europe Calling"

1. OUVERTURE
2. PROLOGUE
   Grandma .. .. Pte. J. Feder
   Child .. Pte. Oppenheimer
3. EUROPE ON THE AIR
4. ENGLAND:
   R. C. Sherriff's "Journey's End"
   Capt. Stanhope .. .. Sgt. S. LOHDE
   Lieut. Hibbert .. .. Pte. F. Gruen
5. FRANCE: BAL TABARIN
   The Chansonier .. Pte. H. Blau
   The Musician .. .. Sgt. W. BAER
   Les Jeunes Filles du Bal Tabarin } Les Spectateurs } The Ballet
6. RUSSIA: MELODIES OF RUSSIA
   Ivan .. .. Pte. ERIC LIFFMANN
   6 Russians Sgt. W. BAER and 5 Accordionists
7. AUSTRIA: PRATER DREAM
   Alois Lerchesgruber .. Pte. H. Blau
   Heder? .. .. ? ? ?
   4 Admirers—The Ballet
8. CZECHOSLOVAKIA:
   J. Hazek's "The Good Soldier Schweyck"
   Imperial Medical Officer Sgt. S. LOHDE
   3 Czech Patients
   Palivetz .. .. Pte. S. Hochberger
   Pokorny .. .. Pte. H. Fleischer
   Schweyck .. Pte. L. Komorner
   Her Imperial Highness .. E. Hutterer
   Medical Orderly .. Pte. F. Weidenbaum
9. ENTRE ACT: The Witch at Work
   The Witch .. Cpl. A. P. SCHMITZ
   Wolf .. .. Pte. H. Reiss
10. GERMANY:
    THE GESTAPO OFFICE
    Nazi Party Secretary .. Sgt. S. LOHDE
    Solicitor .. .. Pte. K. Lowenstein
11. THE COSMOPOLITAN
    Pte. L. Oppenheimer
12. POLAND: CHOPIN'S NOCTURNE
    2 Polish Barons .. Ptes. J. Chlumecky
    F. H. Feuerstein
    2 Nazi Soldiers .. L/Cpl. H. Davidson
    Pte. F. Gruen
13. THE EUROPEAN
    Sgt. S. LOHDE
14. THE GHOSTS OF EUROPE
    The Ballet—Ensemble
    Soloist, Cpl. A. P. SCHMITZ

INTERVAL

Act 3.
"Snow White in Camp"

1. Ouverture
2. Prologue
   Grandma .. .. Pte. J. Feder
   Child .. Pte. L. Oppenheimer
3. The Dwarfs at Home
   Prince Charming Pte. ERIC LIFFMANN
   The Seven Private Dwarfs ..
   The Swing Choir
4. Orderly Room
   The C.O. .. .. O. H. MAYER
   Sergeant Staff .. .. Sgt. S. LOHDE
   2 Soldiers .. Ptes. F. Weidenbaum
   F. Gruen
   The Committee Lady .. E. Hutterer
   The Toya .. .. The Ballet
5. The Sergeant Major
   W/O. H. J. R. STONE
   The Seven Private Dwarfs
6. On Arguing the Point
   Pte. L. Oppenheimer
7. The Dwarfs at the Wharves
   Sergeant Staff .. .. Sgt. S. LOHDE
   Private Charming Pte. ERIC LIFFMANN
   The O.C. .. .. O. H. MAYER
   The Seven Private Dwarfs
8. Calling All Cobbers
   The Ensemble

AT THE PIANOS: L/Cpl. H. PORTNOJ, Ptes. E. FRAENKEL, H. FICHMAN, H. VOSS, S. COHN, R. LAQUEUR

SEVEN DWARFS
H. Goldstein
F. Weidenbaum
O. Stiwelband
W. Hirschfeld
M. Reichwald
H. Hermansohn
A. Landauer

SWING CHOIR
W. Hirschfeld
H. Hermansohn
A. Landauer
O. Stiwelband
M. Reichwald
H. Fraenkel

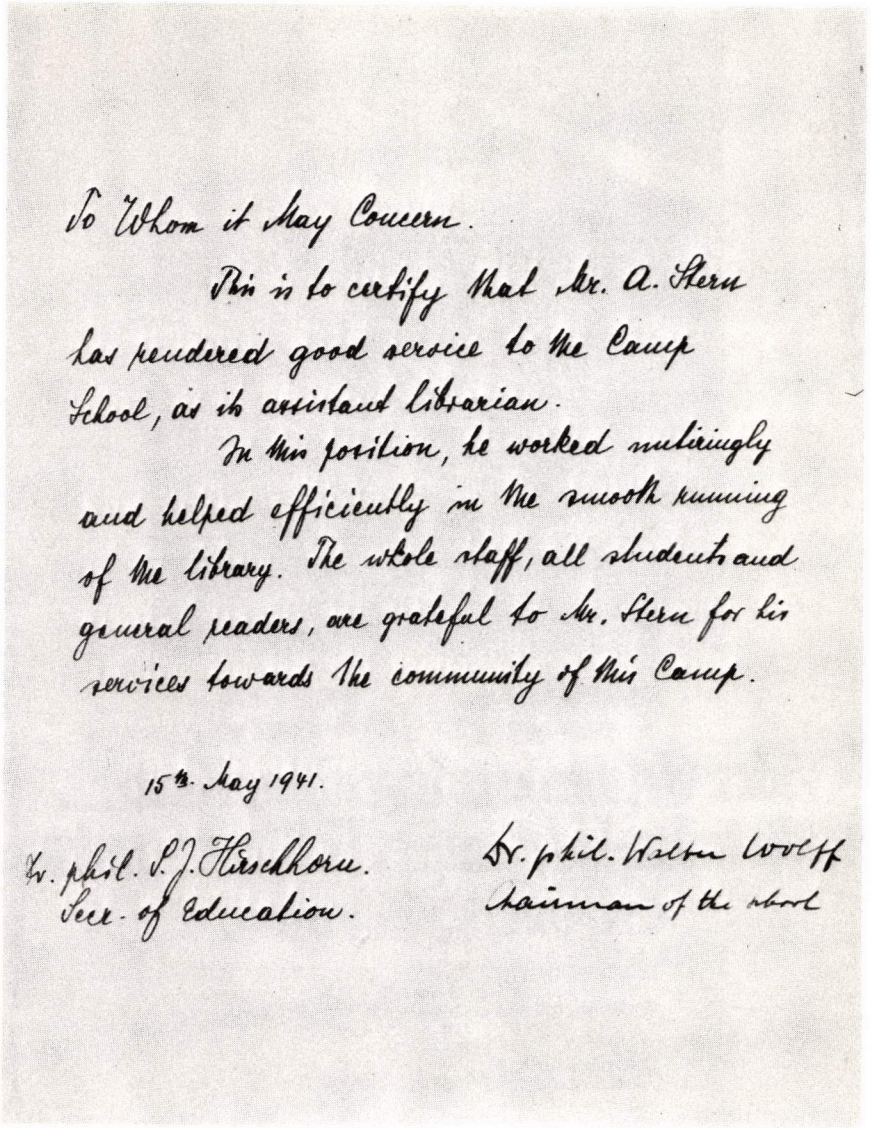
BALLET
C. BEGACH
F. Rosenthal
O. Stiwelband
M. Klein
O. Gabler
E. Schlesinger
J. Feder
H. Goldstein
K. Tichauer

ACCORDIONISTS
Sgt. W. Baer
L/Cpl. K. Blach
L/Cpl. Wuerzburger
Pte. S. Cohn
Pte. H. Loewe
Pte. G. Brandt

"Sergeant Snow White"
Written and Directed by SERGEANT DOC K. STERNBERG
CHOREOGRAPHY: CPL. A. PETER SCHMITZ
Ballet and Dances arranged by Cpl. A. P. Schmitz, M. Lewinsky. Musical Arrangements: Ptes. S. Cohn and H. Fichman
SPECIAL MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY RAY MARTIN
In Charge of Swing Choir: Pte. E. Fraenkel. Schrammel Quartet: Sgt. W. Baer, Ptes. A. Landauer, Reiter, O. Silberstein
Chansons by E. Lehrburger, F. Gottfurcht, R. Popper, A. Gray, F. Hollaender. Poem, "Listen Brothers," by Pte. S. Hochberger
STAGE MANAGER: L/CPL. A. DEUTSCH
In Charge of Light: L/Cpl. H. Davidson
Make Up: Make Up Artist Pte. Carlos Beer. Masks for Ballet "Ghosts of Europe" by Pte. E. Fabian
Costumes by Courtesy of Messrs. J. C. Williamson, Ltd. Wigs by Messrs. L. Barnett & Sons
SCENERY AND STAGE DECORS: L/Cpl. EMIL WITTENBERG,
Pte. K. FRIEDEBERGER, Pte. B. I. MEIER, Pte. F. SCHOENBACH
Chairman of Committee: W/O. H. J. R. STONE Secretary and Business Manager: Pte. H. E. FLEISCHER
Assistant: L/Cpl. E. LIPMANN

Ball Bros. Pty. Ltd., Printers, 222 Bay St., Port Melbourne

Programme for Sergeant Snow White, *Tatura 1943.*



To Whom it May Concern.

This is to certify that Mr. A. Stern has rendered good service to the Camp School, as its assistant librarian.

In this position, he worked untiringly and helped efficiently in the smooth running of the library. The whole staff, all students and general readers, are grateful to Mr. Stern for his services towards the community of this Camp.

15th. May 1941.

Dr. phil. S.J. Hirschhorn.
Secr. of Education.

Dr. phil. Walter Wolff
Chairman of the Board

Reference written for A. Stern.



A poster inviting internees to celebrate the Festival of Lights.

Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand

PRESIDENT:
Alec Masel, Esq., B.A., LL.B.

HON. TREASURER:
S. Wynn, Esq.

HON. SECRETARY:
B. Patkin, Esq.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman, M.A., Ph.D.
Dr. J. Leon Jona, J.P., D.Sc., M.D., M.S.
S. Wertheim, Esq.
Mrs. S. Wynn
Mrs. O. D. Benjamin (W.I.Z.O. Representative)
J. Solvey, Esq. (Education Dept. Convener)
Dr. D. Tabor, M.A., B.Sc., A.R.C.S., Ph.D., (Cantab). (Youth Dept. Convener)
Paul Freedman, Esq., B.A. (Publicity Dept. Convener)
SYDNEY— M. Freilich, Esq.
(Dept. For Zionist Policy) Dr. J. M. Machover, H. B. Newman, Esq., S. Steigrad, Esq.
ADELAIDE—Mrs. Nat Solomons
AUCKLAND, N.Z.—Rev. A. Astor, B.A.

PLEASE NOTE NEW PHONES: MU 6168 MU 6169
ROOM 2, 1ST. FLOOR,
443 LITTLE COLLINS ST.
MELBOURNE
"RIALTO" PHONE 4th COLLINS STREET,
MELBOURNE, C.1

SYDNEY ADDRESS:
Room 34, 3 Castlereagh St., Sydney, N.S.W.
Phone: B 3146.

18th February, 1942.

Mr. Heinz Bock, E39189,
No. 2 Internment Camp,
VICTORIA.

Dear Mr. Bock,

I received your letter dated 12th inst.

As already written to Mr. Hammerstein, I have included your name for a Palestine Certificate but cannot say at this moment when it will come through.

The 48 Certificates received a long time ago were allotted to Halutzim only, and I must act according to the principles laid down by the Jewish Agency.

I expect another lot of Certificates very soon and when they are available I will do my utmost so that one shall be allotted to you.

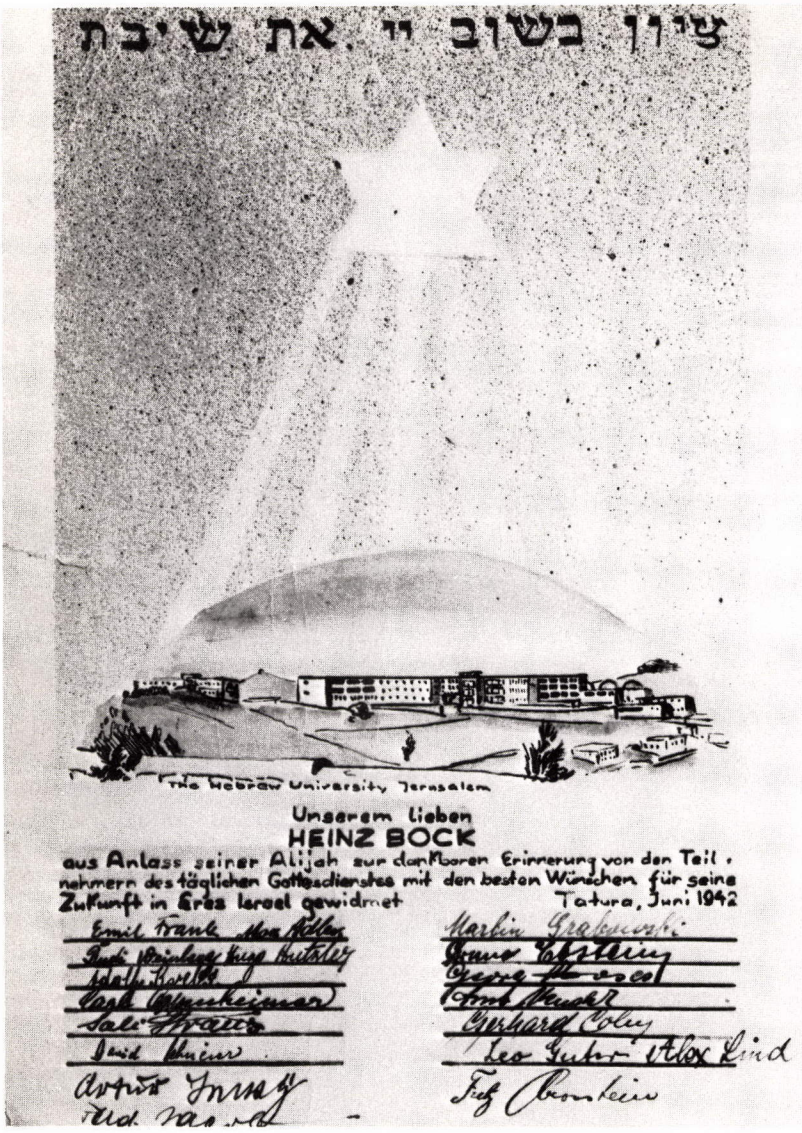
Mr. Hammerstein has written quite a lot about you and I am looking forward to meeting you very soon.

In the meantime, please accept my greetings to you, to Mr. Hammerstein and all our mutual friends in the camp.

Yours sincerely,

HON. SECRETARY.

One of Benzion Patkin's many letters to Tatura offering help and reassurance.



'To our dear Heinz Bock on the occasion of his Aliyah [Emigration to Eretz Israel] and in appreciation of his arranging the daily religious services, we extend to him our best wishes for a successful future in Eretz Israel. Tatura, June 1942.'

CHAPTER 4

Internment at Hay (1940-1)

Before reaching Sydney one group of the *Dunera* inmates left the ship at Melbourne. This group, including Erwin Frenkel, was made up of survivors of the *Arandora Star* plus captured German and Italian seamen. They were taken directly to an internment camp at Tatura, near Shepparton, in Victoria's Goulburn Valley. The rest of the internees travelled from Sydney to No. 7 and No. 8 Internment Camps at Hay, NSW. With the further exception of six internees who were ordered to return from Hay to Sydney almost immediately, the bulk of the *Dunera* internees stayed at Hay from September 1940 until May 1941. The group of six who were recalled from Hay were then shipped to Bombay on board the *Dunera,* and then given their freedom in that city.

On arrival in Sydney Harbour, the internees attracted a certain amount of Press attention. One newspaper carried the headline 'These Men are Dangerous'. The small number of razors still owned by internees, and the eight razors which the 'Dunera Statement' said were distributed to 1600 internees, had done little to make the internees very 'presentable' on their arrival.

Hans Hammerstein 'Many hundreds of men came off the ship unkempt, unshaven, in torn clothes, without any luggage, some even without shoes. One man who could not walk barefoot, wrapped his feet with sheets of wrapping paper . . . I can still see him strutting along as if marching in two big parcels.

'As we walked from the ship to the train between two lines of armed soldiers, reporters photographed us. Later, we saw one of the photos in an old newspaper with an inscription "Captured Germans Arrive". One wild-looking, gloomy, "dangerous" man in the picture was our Dr Meyer, who was normally so carefully neat and elegant. This made many of us smile. As the train took us westwards, we began to realize the vastness of Australia. We calculated that 16 or 18 hours of train travel, in just a small part of New South Wales, would be equivalent to travelling across Europe from the Adriatic to the Baltic Sea.'

Alfred Bruner 'The headlines in the Australian newspapers were most exciting. "Nazi Prisoners-of-War Arrive", etc., was on the front pages. Regiments of soldiers were waiting at the wharf, with machine guns aimed at us. The Jewish internees were specially separated from the German and Italian prisoners-of-war, but we felt that the Australian guards were most suspicious of us. Then for nearly sixteen hours we travelled by train through what we thought was a desert. For about three to four hours we travelled through bush and forest, many parts of which were on fire. It was frightening. Our first impression was that the "Sinai" of Australia was worse than the real one in Eretz Israel, much colder at night and hotter during the day.'

The attitude of the guards to Bruner was exceptionally good, however, as he was one of the youngest of the internees. The Australians used to pat his face with affection, and nick-named him 'baby-face' because he was not yet old enough to shave.

Kurt Fischer 'It was afternoon when we left the ship. It was a wonderful feeling to stand on firm ground and see the buildings of a large city, high rocky banks, and the huge bridge across the Harbour. A tall Australian soldier, with a smile on a friendly pleasant face, wearing a wide slouch hat, motioned me to the train without any urging or hurrying. As the train moved off, soldiers brought the evening meal. It consisted of sandwiches and tea with milk, served from buckets, and fresh fruit. As I drank the tea, I closed my eyes and tried to imagine myself sitting in the midst of my family, my wife and children, each one of them congratulating me on the occasion of my forty-fifth birthday, which was on 4 September. Instead, here I was, together with other arrested refugees, travelling on a train to an unknown destination.

'The train stopped near a big water tank long enough for the locomotive to fill up with water, and then set off again through sand and brush. On the following day we had our first glimpse of kangaroos which, alarmed by the noise of the train, jumped away in the direction of the far horizon. On the second morning we arrived at our destination. Not far from where the train stopped, we could see a number of long barracks, surrounded by a high barbed-wire fence and the usual watch-towers which we were accustomed to seeing at all the other internment camps. The land around was flat and barren. All we could see was sand and small bushes or stunted trees, many metres apart.'

Henry Talbot 'The *Dunera* voyage was a British responsibility. As soon as we hit our first Australian port, the ship was inspected, the

conditions were condemned, and credit must be given to the Australians whose attitude was so different from the hostility of the British. We were greeted with friendship, given fresh food, treated as human beings, even though we did not quite know where we were. At Sydney we disembarked and were put on a train, and one of the guards gave me tobacco and paper, and that is how I learned to roll a cigarette, on the way to Hay.'

Fr Walter König '[Hay] wasn't the luxury camp we were told about during the trip through the Indian Ocean—set on an island in the sea . . . We found ourselves completely isolated, on the edge of a boundless, almost treeless plain. "They've brought us here to let us perish in this wilderness", the engineer from the stern of the HMT *Dunera* called out to me with a scowl. He was one of those who had been picked up from the sea by a Canadian cruiser. "What a dismal country", he added.

'The camp itself—formerly an aerodrome—with its strong double barbed-wire fence and four watch-towers equipped with machine guns, the 32 wooden barrack huts . . . the two big mess huts as assembly halls, and the offices . . . resembled a little fortress: Inside the huts, there was no trace of comfort, apart from the 24 bunks. . . . I was placed in a hut near the entrance, and I still have a list of companions who shared it with me, which includes the names of a university lecturer, a High Court official from Czechoslovakia, a professor of music, a chemist, a commercial traveller—nearly all of them Austrians—and a somewhat eccentric 'Professor' from Berlin . . . a number of young people, amongst whom were two brothers, my mass servers, the Counts of Wolkenstein from Vienna. not all were Catholics.

'We were all victims of Nazi persecution . . . a mixture of people from all walks of life and all races and denominations: 3 per cent were Catholic, 7 per cent were Protestant, the remainder Jews of most varied religious opinions . . . we were divided into two camps of about 1000 men each. Our first task was to sort out the men into sections . . . At the request of my friends, I decided in favour of Hut 8. With me went our Alexian Brother Meyer, the teaching Brother Josten, Professor Meyer, the composer of the 'Dunera Mass', and the majority of the Catholics. I had no reason to regret my choice . . . All we needed to do now was to set up an administrative system . . . The inmates of each hut elected their hut-captain, and the captains formed the camp parliament that at first met each evening. Then there was the choice of a spokesman and his deputies. After a lively debate, the Viennese lawyer, Dr Wierner, and the Rhenish financier, Auerbach, were elected.'

Erwin Lamm 'As we boarded the train which took us to the camp in Hay, we suddenly heard a voice calling out "Shabbat Shalom". It sounded like the voice of an angel from Heaven. At first we could not believe that it was the voice of a man; we thought it was some kind of "sound mirage". In fact, it was the usual Sabbath greeting in the Hebrew language called out by an Australian soldier who had served in the Middle East and had spent some time with Jews in Eretz Israel.'

Hans Hammerstein 'We were prisoners, though the Australians treated us kindly. Having arrived at Hay railway station, we left the train and began a long walk to the camp. It was not easy after sitting, standing, or lying down for eight weeks with a minimum of exercise, if any. But it created a romantic impression, reminiscent of the pictures of the American Civil War—large groups of men walking with an effort, guarded by armed soldiers, some of them on horses, all wearing broad hats. One of the good things about it was that we had no luggage to carry. Whether anything that had been stolen would be returned, we would find out later.

'It was September 1940, supposed to be the end of the first week of an Australian spring. But the sun was blazing hot and very few of us had a hat. We had to wait to be counted and, as always, our guards did not count correctly. They repeated the count several times, but at every count they had a different result! At last we entered the huts. Each hut had 32 berths, 16 below and 16 above, each with a straw palliasse and a woollen blanket but no sheets. To provide better ventilation and to keep the huts cooler in hot weather, there was an opening of about 12 inches between the walls and the roof. In order to keep birds out of the huts, it was covered with a wire net. But this net did not prevent the flies from coming in, in their thousands. They covered us at all times, also the berths and the food, and even the sand storms did not stop them. The sand and the flies mixed freely together.'

Hans Hammerstein remembers the Camp Commandant as a very nice man who refused to believe, however, that the internees' belongings had been stolen by British guards. He simply said 'British soldiers would not do such a thing'. Nor could he believe that the internees had no clothes except those they were wearing, and no soap or towels. At first he believed the statements of a British officer from the *Dunera* published in an Australian newspaper: that the internees were 'difficult' on the voyage, that they mutinied and tried to burn the ship. Naturally, the Commandant was at a loss to know whom to believe. Nevertheless, he was humane in his administration. He arranged for 'fatigue hats', tooth brushes, soap, and small hand-towels for the internees, and ordered large stocks of toilet paper from Sydney

Hans Hammerstein 'Whatever toilet paper was in the camp had to be rationed by persons who stood at the entrance to every lavatory handing out two or three pieces to every visitor. . . There was no writing paper as such at first. Yet the ingenuity of man in times of need is often most remarkable. One of the inmates who knew by heart many of Hayim Nakhman Bialik's poems in their original Hebrew decided to translate them into German. Somehow, he managed to save a few pieces of toilet paper on which he wrote the German version of the poems. He still has the "originals" in his possession!

'Not long after our arrival we were notified that our "luggage" from the *Dunera* had arrived and we were requested to sort it out and each to take his belongings. In fact, what did arrive were the ruins of our one-time suitcases and other luggage. The impression was that these were things found by the cleaners of the ship after we had disembarked. Instead of taking them to the rubbish tip they had apparently decided to prove their "honesty" and sent to us everything they swept up. The Camp Commandant stood in front of the heap of trash, one-time suitcases, briefcases and other things, and looked aghast.

'We arranged the "luggage" in rows for the internees to identify what "exhibits" belonged to whom. My own suitcase was not there, nor any of its contents. But by some miracle, the portfolio containing my most precious papers and documents, which a soldier on the *Dunera* had snatched violently from me whilst we were still in Liverpool, and thrown into a corner of the heap, was saved—completely untouched. It was the exhibition of the remnants of our belongings, following on the stories told by us to the Australian guards about our adventures on the *Dunera,* that finally convinced them that we were not enemies but victims of circumstances. It was their duty to keep us in internment and they had to carry it out, but they helped us to bear our fate in the best manner they could.

'Even the fresh fruit and sandwiches and cakes [on the train to Hay] we were given were so much the more delicious because of the manner in which the Australian soldiers distributed them. Everything was done with a smile, and when an approach was made, it was done with a "please" or "thank you". It was a long, long time since such food had been given or presented to us in such a manner. Certainly not on the *Dunera* nor on the Isle of Man, or at Kitchener Camp, and certainly not in the last "free" years in Nazi Germany where the motto of the times was "Guns before and more than butter". I wondered if these were the first signs of a change of mind—new orders to treat us friendlily . . . As we learned later, a storm broke out in the British Parliament, and the Government was sharply attacked from all sides for the brutal treatment of so many of Britain's friends.'

Kurt Fischer 'The barracks in which we were accommodated were well ventilated but nevertheless it was terribly hot inside. Each barrack had upper and lower bunks and in the centre was a long structure like a bench on which we found bunk bedding for 40 people. The base of the bed consisted of wire netting with a woollen blanket, which was a standard Australian soldier's issue, on it. Although at the beginning life at Hay camp was monotonous, we were able, at least once a week, on Sunday, to walk to the Murrumbidgee River, a few kilometres away. At the point where we usually visited, the river was neither very wide nor very deep. It wound its leisurely way between high banks shaded by beautiful eucalyptus trees. Naturally, we did not miss the opportunity to bathe and swim, resting afterwards on the narrow sandy bank.

'Occasionally a number of us were taken to Hay to do some casual work there. Lucky were those who were chosen for such tasks. Not only was it a change from the day-to-day monotony but it was also an opportunity to earn a little money. Such excursions could not, however, make us forget our situation, for the sultry weather and high humidity kept reminding us where we were. There were also fierce sandstorms which, for some unknown reason, usually occurred on Fridays. On the other hand, we experienced from time to time some lovely moments, such as when flocks of multi-coloured parrots flew in from somewhere near the Murrumbidgee. Their bright plumage shone in the sun as they hovered over our huts, screeching loudly; then they gradually disappeared over the horizon, to return again a day or so later.'

Asher Joseph 'From summer in England, to the icy weather of the North Atlantic ocean, then to the heat of the Equator, to cold winds again from the Antarctic and, please remember, we were not on a pleasure-cruise ship but packed like sardines on a ship which would normally carry about a quarter of the number. Then came the biting extremes of the camp in New South Wales—freezing cold at night and searing heat during the day. The nearest settlement to our internment camp, called Hay, looked like a shanty town with emaciated people and sheep which were starving because of a prolonged drought. We did not look any better or different and, naturally, we feared the worst. But thank God, we pulled together and gradually began to adjust ourselves to yet another new camp.'

Nearly six hundred kilometres from Sydney, with only a very small country town nearby, the *Dunera* internees were indeed very isolated on a sparsely populated plain of featureless landscape and very wide horizons. No wonder one of the drawings by an internee of the camp

fence and a watch-tower was captioned 'On the Edge of the World'. The total rainfall in the Hay district for 1940 was only five inches. The *Australian Jewish Forum* noted in June 1942 that 'There is in the vernacular Australian the following figurative expression: "Hell and Hay are the hottest places in the world" . . . Fever came, when the temperature rose to 100 degrees Fahrenheit and over, and attacked the youths between the ages of 18 and 22 and left many with a weakened heart condition.' But the social isolation of such an intelligent and well-educated group of German-speaking Europeans, and the Kafka-esque absurdity of their legal status were just as insupportable as the appalling weather and climate. It was not until March 1941 that the Australian Zionist movement could be organized to assist the Jewish internees at Hay (and Tatura). For 40 days after their arrival in September 1940 they were cut off from the outside world for 'security reasons'. Then, by a gradual development of interest from both Jewish and non-Jewish welfare bodies, assisted by a more humane British-Australian administration, the *Dunera* internees became more closely associated with Australian civilian life.

In the meantime, and throughout the eight months' stay at the No. 7 and 8 Camps at Hay, then again at Tatura, the internees made up for this social segregation (which was also sexual segregation) by a vigorous and extraordinarily well-managed democratic and functional life. The camp assumed the character of 'a small working republic'—to use the words of one internee, Loewald. Each hut elected a hut leader or spokesman; a camp 'Parliament', and even a court of arbitration were created. A daily routine helped to mitigate the defects of the internees' situation.

Hans Hammerstein 'As camp routines became established, the daily roll-call was no longer held in the open. A few soldiers went through the huts in the evenings and looked to see if any bed was empty. Since every bed was occupied, it meant that all the internees were in.

'In accordance with British tradition and in the light of long experience with prisoners' camps, the authorities at Hay did not use force or terror but tried to keep us busy and divert our attention to other things. We were asked to elect a spokesman and an election committee, to listen to candidates and to be democratic and tolerant. The Camp Commander supervized everything that was being done and saw that it was conducted fair and square. Special ballot boxes were provided, together with specially prepared voting papers on which we wrote the name of the man or men each of us wanted to be elected. We had to pass between two soldiers to the ballot box and put

our voting paper into it, and the counting of votes was done in the presence of the Camp Commander. A young, self-confident and gifted man by the name of Eppenstein was elected as camp spokesman. In addition, inmates of each hut elected a hut leader and all of these formed a kind of Parliament which discussed all matters connected with our internment and life in the camp. It took decisions and acted accordingly.

'All these things occupied our time and minds to such an extent that many of us, it seemed to me, forgot to talk about and protest against our unjust internment. We began to organize our day-to-day routine as if the internment itself was a natural, unalterable way of life.'

DOCUMENT Plan of the camp organization.

Source: *The Boomerang*, Magazine of No 7 Camp, Hay, 16 May 1941 (No 12).

I ADMINISTRATION

Headquarters

Legal & Emigration Dept
Index Office
Post Office

Camp Leaders
CIS Secretaries
Group Captains
Hut Captains
Watch Service

Bank
Canteen
Welfare Dept.

II CULTURE

Education Dept

General Camp Library
Camp School Library
Camp Paper
Debating Society
Religious Services

Administration
Camp School
Teachers
CS Orderlies
Quiet Hut Orderlies

Recreation Dept

Producers
Artists
Independent Artists
Stage Staff
Sports
Sports Ground Maintenance Staff

III HYGIENE and MAINTENANCE

Hospital
Doctors
Orderlies

Medical Hut
Doctors
Orderlies
Dispenser

Dental Station
Dentists
Orderlies

General Working Party
Labour Dept
Labour Exchange
Workshops:
Carpenters
Tin Smiths
Electrician
Bootmakers
Tailors
Watchmakers
Bookbinders
General Work

Cleaning Party
Boilers
Laundry
Wash Houses
Showers
Lavatories
Grease Traps
Incinerators
Dust Bins
General Camp Cleaning

Outside Work
Labour Dept
QM Store Party
QM Rail Party
Salvage
Pay Office
Base Hospital Orderlies
Cleaning Fatigues
Sand Party
Farm Party
Horse Lines

IV CATERING

Kitchen A & B
Store
Cooks
Cooks' Helps
Bakers
Diet Kitchen
Potato Peelers
Plate Washers
Kettle Scrapers
Stokers
Woodchoppers
Dish Washers

Kosher Kitchen
Store
Cooks
Cooks' Helps
Bakers
Potato Peelers
Dish Washers
Plate Washers

Mess Huts I, III, IV
Mess Orderlies
Mess Hut Cleaners

Mess Hut II
Mess Orderlies
Mess Hut Cleaners

Hans Hammerstein 'We established a camp canteen which sold cigarettes, stationery, chocolates, magazines, books and many other amenities which were brought from Sydney. I still have and use the two-volume English Dictionary I purchased in the camp canteen, over 35 years ago. As a result of good sales and management, the canteen made a nice profit which enabled us to pay "wages" to those who worked in the kitchen, the cleaners, the hairdressers etc. Gradually we began to receive mail, and some of us received moneys which had been left in England, prior to our transportation to Australia. Others began to receive money from friends and relatives in America, Africa and later also from Australians. Thus, the canteen was a busy store. The more profit it made the more money was paid to more internees, such as teachers and office workers.

'We had several offices, each performing specific functions. There was the general camp office, an office for emigration to other countries, an office for claims of compensation for property lost or stolen between the time of embarkation on the *Dunera* in England and arrival in Australia. We established a camp school which deserved maximum praise. This school helped many of the internees to overcome the paucity of day-to-day activity, physical and mental, as well as the terrible emptiness in the daily life. But what was still more important, the camp school was able to teach many men trades and to help others in their preparations for matriculation examinations, as well as examinations for entry into university. In my opinion, the great merit of the school was its high standard. The reason for this was simple. Amongst the internees were so many talented men, qualified in various arts and sciences, for whom teaching their particular subjects was part of themselves and their way of life. Moreover, the high standard of the camp school was in no way diminished by the primitive conditions, under which the teachers and lecturers had to perform their duties.

'The school was located in the large dining room, where about 20 teachers taught different subjects at twenty tables. Each table was allocated to a certain teacher teaching a certain subject and every seat allocated to one particular student. To avoid chaos, monitors were appointed to ensure that no teacher spoke too loudly, and that each lesson or lecture should terminate punctually, thus making way for the next teacher and his students to take their lesson. Very few, if any, of the internees did not avail themselves of the opportunity to learn something, whether it was English or the language of the country the internee hoped to migrate to eventually. One could even learn Japanese. There were study groups in botany, mathematics, history, psychology and other subjects, and public lectures, attended by several hundred internees, were organized on special topics.'

Fr Walter König 'A rich cultural life had developed in the camp. There was no lack of scientific minds, lawyers, doctors, economists, artists, literary men . . . even professional actors . . . the camp university or camp school as it was modestly called, was the focal point. There were lectures on chemistry, astronomy, atomic research, on higher mathematics and commerce, language courses in Russian, Spanish, French and English . . . among the teachers, Professor Ludwig Merschfeld, formerly teacher of mathematics, became known for his versatility. On Sunday mornings, we had record-concerts. The evenings were reserved for lectures on current political, philosophical and specialized problems. These alternated with theatrical productions, readings from one's own creative writings, or art exhibitions.'

Max Bruch 'I gladly drifted into an entertainment group, headed by Dr Kurt Sternberg, a recognized film director in Germany. I became his assistant, which involved me in co-producing, as well as helping out with various acting parts, whenever needed—a wonderful escape from the daily camp routine, which created strong bonds between the participants. The other job I had was chopping up firewood for the camp kitchen, which earned me not only camp money (from sixpence to two shillings and sixpence a time), but also side benefits like physical exercise and extra helpings of food!

'Our main activities were in staging sketches—revues, plays, musical presentations, instrumental and others. We even staged *Journey's End* and the well-known play *The Good Soldier Schweik*, also, *Sergeant Snow White* and others. The latter was created in camp and later presented at the Union Theatre, Melbourne University, by the members of the 8th Employment Coy AMF, which consisted only of ex-internees. "Doc" Sternberg again took charge of it as we had a number of well-known artists assembled there, to name a few: Bim Meyer, Emil Wittenberg, Eric Liffmann, Rudy Laqueur, Ray Martin, Hein Heckroth, Max Lewinsky, Rittermann, Syd Loder, myself and many others.

'I look back on those days as being influential of my joining the Melbourne Little Theatre Coy which involved me in a long, varied and pleasant theatrical career in Australia. Another popular institution in the cultural life of the camp was the "debating society", whose functions were also attended by many hundreds of internees.'

K. G. Loewald 'A camp leadership was elected, as were hut captains, and contacts began to be established with the outside world. A man from an aid organization arrived from Sydney, stood on a table, told us that being far from the theatre of war we were lucky

people, and distributed two tubes of toothpaste and five sticks of chewing gum. Our letters were written on prisoner-of-war forms and censored . . . The authorities left us alone except for roll calls, which were quite exasperating . . . None of us dreamed of escaping; none of us to the best of my knowledge ever tried, at Hay or elsewhere, but we had our two roll calls a day for years.

'The canteen obtained tobacco, sweets, canned fruit and other items and would have permitted us to buy them at low prices. But a banker among us devised the system under which we enabled the camp management to pay salaries to every employed man in the camp and to make welfare payments to the indigent and helpless, by raising prices a little and distributing the resulting profits. Everyone who worked earned at least 6*d.* a week, enough to buy a package of the cheapest cigarettes . . . The highest salary was 3*s.* 6*d.* a week earned by grease-trap cleaners and the latrine party members . . .

'A camp school was organized, as were individual lecture series, clubs, and sport teams. One group among us consisted of orthodox Jews who ate Kasher food only; this required a special division in the kitchen. Religious services were held. Individual artists began to paint, sculpt, compose, and perform. A stage group and a choir were formed, as was a chamber orchestra. Help was arriving from church groups and other benevolent societies and individuals: a piano, string instruments, printed music, books in several languages, instruments to aid in the study of technical subjects came from Sydney and Melbourne . . . As all these group and individual actions and activities began to emerge and to develop their own impetus, the camp assumed the character of a small working republic . . . We were permitted to write a severely limited number of letters, many of which never reached their destinations, and all . . . bore printed warnings in German and Italian and were censored. The prisoner-of-war status we inferred from this infuriated us and even led to a small riot which caused the guard to be called out, but abated shortly . . .

'Upon arrival at Hay, I had a letter from my parents and sister in Stockholm where they were trying to promote their migration to the United States in the face of a nearly insurmountable obstacle: the Nazis, together with General Franco, controlled the west coast of Europe. Early in 1941 I received a cable from Vladivostok telling me that my family was on its way, not many weeks before the Germans invaded the Soviet Union and cut off that escape route as well. It was to take me another five years to be reunited with my family . . .

'I lived in a fairly intellectual hut. Among its inhabitants there were a painter, two philologists, a Catholic research scholar (whom we had to treat with a certain amount of brutality before we succeeded in putting an end to his thunderous snoring), one of the trio of brilliant

young conversationalists whom I had admired on board ship, and who now teaches political science at La Trobe University (Professor Hugo Wolfsohn), an aspiring young poet who had been at Oxford when interned, some men with business backgrounds, my friend Egon the sheet metal worker, a man [Boaz Bischofswerder] and his son, now an Australian music critic [Felix Werder], and an assortment of young men in or near their twenties. . .

'The philologists became camp school teachers of English and the classical languages. The brilliant conversationalist taught Italian; I took his course. The budding young poet got up at two in the morning to compose by moonlight stanzas reminiscent of Rilke. Egon took lessons in drafting. Most of those who did not teach took one course or another. And I began to read and to continue my musical education. At 20, I finally possessed both the leisure and desire to read good books . . . I made friends with a philosopher and, walking slowly round the camp, engaged in discussion and debate with him and others. I had had a pretty decent education at one of Berlin's best high schools, but restricted . . . under the Nazis and, in London, under conditions of factory work and lack of funds had retarded my intellectual development. The two years I spent behind barbed wire were a most fruitful time for me . . .

'I also helped found one of the sports teams. The camp sport was handball, a German game requiring a team similar to that of soccer, in which the ball, which must not be touched by feet, is bounced when not being passed or aimed at the goal. We had about eight teams which followed a regular schedule of games. The goalie of the best team is now a distinguished member of the Australian National University (Professor Fred H. Gruen). Our team, called "Hay West", was built around my sturdy friend Egon, who earned the name of "Fire Department" because of his ability to be at every trouble spot during the game . . .

'Among us we counted a distinguished musician and pianist (Peter Stadlen), who now set about to train a choir when he did not practise his instrument or represent his hut in our parliament. In the course of our stay at Hay he gave a piano recital (Beethoven, Chopin, Stravinsky) and conducted several choral works, which he had had to transpose for male voices only and for such instruments as were available. The choir sang Austrian folk songs and works by Orlando di Lasso, Lully, and—so it was believed—Mozart; his "12th Mass" was actually composed by a man called Zulehner, whose name is a wonderful pun on his attempt to pass his work off as Mozart's; but the greatest musical event was the camp production of Handel's oratorio "Israel in Egypt". There were among us several men with theatrical experience as well as a composer of light music. Of their

productions in Hay, I remember a revue, *The Journey Around the World.* The latter contained what would surely have been musical hits anywhere which are probably lost to posterity, although I can reconstruct parts of them. Their composer, I believe, perished when, on his way back to Britain, his ship went down . . .

'For all the artistic events the camp offered, the Camp Commandant and his officers were invited. They always came and enjoyed the theatrical shows, good-naturedly tolerating such jibes at them or at authorities in general as we ventured to insert; during concerts they slept. They missed what, as later experience showed me, were among the best musical presentations to be found in Australia in those years . . .

'As time went by, the peculiarities of the populations of individual huts or hut groups became apparent. The hut of the pianist and musician was known by his name . . . In hut captain meetings (our parliament), he was soon known as a gadfly and contributor of unorthodox ideas, and his constituents were thought to be slightly mad. Everybody "did his thing", and these activities ranged from the breeding of revolting desert animals to research in higher mathematics. One of the members later obtained a special release from internment when called to teach at the University of Melbourne (Dr Felix Behrend). As I learned when I joined this group in another camp, it was a most congenial and extraordinarily articulate and witty community.

'The hut in which the camp spokesman lived was called "Roebuck" after the attractive pub on Richmond Hill in Surrey . . . Apart from him and the most feared handball forward, it held students of philosophy and history as well as some artists. One of the latter designed the paper money which we used, since the possession of cash was forbidden. This camp money, in sixpence, shilling and florin denominations, had a common design and a different colour for each value. The design appeared to consist mainly of sheep and barbed wire but, to the sharp eye or under a microscope, showed a number of details such as the name of a prominent fellow internee in the wool of each sheep, the dates of our *Dunera* journey, and the theme of the camp song ("We're here because we're here because we're here because we're here", sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne) intertwined with the barbed wire. Today these bills are collectors' items . . .

'There was a hut of young Zionists' there was a group of huts which housed members of the Austrian nobility . . . There was a hut of snobs, one of whom persisted, when going to the common washrooms in his dressing gown, in carrying a tray of toothpaste and soap. There was a hut of young men who tried to deny that they came from the Continent, attempted to pass themselves off as misplaced

Englishmen, and referred to the German language as "Chinese". There was a group of huts with orthodox Jews and another with former inmates of the Kitchener Camp. There was a hut of German-speaking Czechs . . .

'Relations between all these groups were amiable at all times. There had been some animated discussion even on board ship of the advisability and justification of maintaining orthodox Jewish laws . . . and we had laughed with admiration . . . at their leader who, comparing himself to Moses, spoke of "leading his children into the desert" and had insisted on and succeeded in obtaining and upholding separate cooking and eating facilities for them. There also developed and persisted . . . rivalry between German-born and Austrian internees. The Germans considered the Austrians noisy and sloppy, and the Austrians saw the Germans as rigid, humourless . . . Among the snobs there were a number of men who maintained impeccable dress at all times. I remember a couple of men who always wore pin-striped suits; others wore elegant hats, and many wore ties. None of these, to the best of my recollection, belong to the aristocracy.

'The insufficiency of food on the ship may have contributed to the eating habits of some internees. There were sophisticated, even distinguished men who . . . had become impatient and . . . eager to be the first to obtain their helpings . . . Some became hoarders and went into "business" with ill-gotten ingredients supplemented by canteen purchases, which they turned into pancakes and sold . . .'

Franz Stampfl 'I went to the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 and, although not Jewish, I was disturbed by what I saw and learned there. I realized that sooner or later, Nazism would also come to Austria. So I decided, after my return to Vienna, to leave for England. On arrival there, I was accepted as a student at Cambridge University and soon after I became a coach for athletics there as well as in some English sporting clubs.

'I was happy with what I was doing. I loved England and did my best to help the English sportsmen and sportswomen in developing their sporting activities and I felt they were happy with my coaching. I was not yet naturalized when World War II broke out and, being an alien, I was interned and later, together with thousands of others, I was deported overseas. Instead of using me for physical training of those on military service, I was shipped on the *Dunera* for internment in Australia.

'The internment with so many refugees was one of the greatest experiences in my life . . . When we arrived in the camps in Hay (and later in Tatura), I could see that a large number of the internees there

were suffering as a result of boredom and loneliness as if they were rejected from anything worthwhile. The only reason I could attribute to such a state of personal feelings was because they had nothing particular to do. Like some others in the camps, I sensed the danger of the situation and decided to make a personal effort to improve it.

'I introduced sporting activities and, as time progressed, the first group led to the organization of many others which engaged themselves in many spheres of sport from athletics to boxing, wrestling, football and others. The group which excelled itself from the beginning consisted of members of *Hehalutz* (a Zionist pioneering organization the members of which, even prior to leaving Germany or Austria, dedicated themselves to the agricultural development settlement in Eretz Israel). At first I did not even know the meaning of the name *Hehalutz,* although I heard it many times. I only knew all its members were keen to become fit and continuously asked for new methods to build muscle in a speedy manner.

'Although I don't recall his name, I remember his tall healthy figure, about six feet six inches tall, very strong and with firmness and tenacity written on his face. I could say, he was a champion boxer. He was an Orthodox-Religious Jew and determined that all Orthodox-Religious younger men, even if they had nothing to do with the *Hehalutz*, should also engage themselves in sport. He partly succeeded in his efforts. He ruled his group with a rod of iron. He knew that anyone who wished to go to Eretz Israel must be trained to fight for its freedom.

'It was very hot in Hay during the day but very cold at night. I worked very hard with all the sporting groups. I made them continue with their physical exercises under all conditions, climatic and others, and gradually began to feel the satisfaction of succeeding in my efforts, if not wholly then at least partly. At that time I was 27 years old. I utilized the experience I attained in coaching during the few years in England and Northern Ireland prior to my internment, and before that in Europe, for the organization of sporting activities and coaching in Hay and in Tatura.

'At that time it was not just a "job" for me. It was an inner desire to survive and remain sane for myself and my friends in the camps. It was a matter of urgency to develop physical fitness without which many of us could have perished, as happened with some internees who did not even try to overcome their feelings of indifference and melancholy. The fact that I and a few of the other "old" sportsmen were continuously engaged in physical exercises with tremendous fervour and effort gave all the other internees the impetus and lead they needed so much.

'Amongst other sporting groups and teams, there were twelve soccer teams at Hay and these competed with each other. As it

happened, Armin Stern (later Manfred Stern) was the first casualty to be taken from the camp to the Hay District Hospital after having been injured in one of these soccer matches.'

Franz Stampfl was speaking in his hut situated on the edge of the Sports Oval in the University of Melbourne grounds, where he now trains athletes for local, Commonwealth, Olympic or any other international games.

Robert Kahn 'I learned, by accident, that Rabbi Dr Israel Porush had been appointed Chief Minister of the Great Synagogue in Sydney and that he and Mrs Porush had already arrived in Australia. I wrote to them conveying my congratulations and expressing the hope of hearing from them and also meeting them quite soon. I knew that they were the same Rabbi and Mrs Porush who had been instrumental in getting me out of Germany under the aegis of the B'Nai B'Rith, a few years earlier and thus saving my life. Also, after my arrival in England, they had taken a very personal and warm interest in my welfare.

'Great was my disappointment when I received no reply whatsoever from them. I waited a week, a month, but still there was no acknowledgement to my letter, and I reluctantly assumed that the good Rabbi did not find it politic to reply, whilst I was in my situation as a captive. Two years later, when I was serving in the Australian Military Forces, I decided to write to Rabbi and Mrs Porush again. This time I received an immediate and most cordial answer, with an invitation to be their guest at my next leave. Naturally, I was delighted to accept such an invitation. I travelled to Sydney and was welcomed by the Porush family like a long-lost son. One of their first questions was why I had not written to them earlier. When I told my friends that I did write but received no answer their reply was, I should have written again. The bitter truth was that the censorship was so vicious, it not only stopped my letter from leaving for its destination, it omitted even to advise me it had done so.

'The Porush family was naturally interested to know about the life in the camps at Hay and Tatura, as well as in the army. I could only tell them about the camp-life. I acquainted them with the excellent way in which theatrical performances were arranged and performed in the internment camps by the internees and for the internees. Although, I said, such activities in POW camps are not unknown, few, if any, would have rivalled the standards of those held in Hay and Tatura, where the internees included some professional actors, stage designers, producers, musicians, and even composers. In particular, I emphasized such productions as Goethe's *Faust* and Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik*.

'Only some of the internees spoke English fluently, but nearly all could understand it fairly well. Newspapers received in the camps, as most other reading matter, were mainly in English, and all communications with the camp authorities and guards were in the same language, though amongst themselves the internees usually conversed in German. Thus, willy-nilly, the camp culture became bi-lingual, resulting over a period of time in the development of an Anglo-German mishmash or argot that depended for its components as much on the relative expressiveness of the two languages as on the characteristics of resourceful individuals, coming up with expressions that captured the imagination of their fellow-internees.

'It is to be regretted that an excellent opportunity was lost in those days at the camp in Hay, because no philologist was available to study the laws affecting the development of mixed languages, argots and pidgin. There were two compounds each containing 1000 people, of a similar population sample, each exposed to the same bi-lingual environment and influences, yet each compound was strictly isolated from the other as far as the inmates were concerned. A philologist, noting and comparing the picturesque mixture of English and German spoken in each compound, could have arrived at some interesting and valuable findings on the laws of language development. Differences between the two compounds would have pointed to the influence of individuals, whereas similarities of expression would have suggested more general precepts at work.'

Hans Hammerstein 'The Christians, although a small minority of the internees, formed their own group. Most of them were, of course, baptised Jews. But there was also a Catholic Priest and a Protestant Pastor. We, the Jewish internees, though also prisoners like the Christians, suddenly felt that, after all, we were not being looked upon by them as if we were inferior. Their attitude to us changed to the extent that if we were not completely equal, we were not second-rate either. We also thought that here, in this isolated camp, near Hay, in New South Wales, Australia, whilst we Jews were the majority, we could have our own way and style of life. Because "there" we had to live up to what "they will say", but here we were independent. Was it an error on our part to think like this?'

Fr Walter König 'A completely unexpected incident brought us once more in contact with life outside the camp.

'I was strolling along beside the barbed-wire fence when a military guard noticed me. Cautiously he made sure there was no officer about. Then he called out to me: "Are you a priest?" "Yes, I am", I replied. He came closer. "Are you a Catholic priest?" When I again

said yes, he asked: "But how do you come to be interned? We can't have that! I'll get in touch with the Archbishop of Sydney right away. Please let me know what you are in need of. I'll get it for you and, besides, I'll tell the parish priest of Hay about you." Not content with that, a few days later the stranger wrote me a charming letter . . .

'A short time later the parish priest of Hay, Father J. Carroll . . . appeared in the camp and provided the Catholics with everything needed . . . from pencil and paper to violin and harmonium and even a piano for musical entertainments. But above all, they supplied us with a mass-kit, then he telephoned the Superiors of the Jesuit Order in Sydney and Melbourne . . .

'Traces of the shattering experiences aboard the *Dunera* were clearly discernible . . . The constant danger, the over-crowding of the holds, the separation from all that had made life worth living . . . had awakened in many, a feeling of utter weakness and powerlessness. An increased interest in religious knowledge had showed itself, and . . . introductory talks were given on the liturgy of the Mass . . . [also] on a variety of religious subjects . . .

'No event made such a lasting impression as the Midnight Mass in the mess-hut at Christmas, 1940 . . . Beforehand, all the Christian denominations had held a Christmas celebration in common, with speeches, distribution of presents and singing. Then came individual religious celebrations by the different Christian groups: Anglicans, Quakers and Lutherans. For our *Missa Cantata* at midnight . . . the whole was interwoven with the organ playing of our maestro, and the carol singing of his *Dunera* choir . . . the congregation was a sea of heads—many non-Catholics had politely asked permission to attend—and outside in the dark you could see other faces pressed against the window-panes. In my own hut, a pleasant surprise was awaiting me, an address in verse by Professor Ullman, the original music version of the Third Christmas Mass by Professor Meyer, an artistically executed prayer by Mr Walter Saul, another fine poem by Dr Stephen Ziesse—the latter in grateful remembrance of his baptism and unexpected delivery from Dachau (a German concentration camp)—and a moving letter from Mr Sigmund Berger, the chemist, who was later killed so tragically on his way back to England (his ship was torpedoed and he himself taken by a shark) . . .

'It would be a mistake to suppose that all were content with their lot. The longing for freedom was too strong, sorrow caused by separation from one's family too deep, and the memory of the horrors undergone was too vivid, for true happiness to exist . . . Five of the prisoners had, in fact, fallen victim to imprisonment psychosis and had to be taken to a sanatorium of the famous physiologist, Dr Bois Reimand, who in front of everyone, tried to open the veins in his

wrists. Only healthy nerves are capable of standing up to such trials for any length of time.

'Almost daily, we had visitors in our hut. Clergy of other confessions often came for a friendly exchange of ideas. We felt we were closely drawn together by our common fate. Amongst these, were the Rabbi David from Bochum, deeply religious and well versed in literature, a young Anglican deacon, a Baptist preacher, and many others. But that didn't stop conflict from making itself felt. The philosophical, political and social contrasts found together here in such a cramped space were too basic. To pass over the minor disturbances during religious services which were quickly dealt with, an attempt to give the boys a species of "sex enlightenment" through lectures was turning out to be dangerous. At the evening session of the camp parliament, of which I was a member, I vigorously opposed the continuation of these lectures, but my ideas were rejected as reactionary, as an expression of a philosophy that belonged to the past. However, I received much valuable support—above all from one of the Jewish leaders, who likewise stated that the ideas were far too radical. The next day I had the satisfaction of seeing that the camp newspaper agreed with me and advised the cessation of the lectures.

'Then on 30 September, I received from Fr John Meagher, SJ, Superior of the Australian Vice-Province of the Society of Jesus, the information that he would immediately seek me out. Later, I had the pleasure of meeting him at the Commandant's office. He brought a not inconsiderable sum of money to cover our (the group of Catholics) immediate expenses. Almost simultaneously, the letters arrived from the Apostolic Delegate Panico, from Archbishop—later Cardinal—Gilroy of Sydney, and from Dr Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, all of whom I had asked to intervene on behalf of the Catholics then entrusted to me. Archbishop Mannix, to whom I had recommended the Wolkenstein brothers, sons of a State Secretary in Vienna, assured me in his personal letter that "the boys would be gladly received at Xavier College, conducted by the Jesuit Fathers, free of expense, provided the Government consents . . ."

'Help came from all sides. Bishop Fox of Wilcannia-Forbes, the Diocesan Bishop of Hay, appointed me parish priest of the camp and put his own Army Chaplain, Fr Stokes, at our disposal. From Sydney, Fr Noel Hehir, SJ, and the Catholic Welfare Organisation helped with books, tobacco, cigarettes and a Missal. For further needs, Father Meagher set up an account for us with a businessman in Sydney. Our days of splendid isolation were finally numbered.'

Although the Christian minority amongst the internees numbered only about 10 per cent, including Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans

and others, there was much missionary activity in evidence, particularly amongst the younger Jewish internees. This fact is verified by the internees themselves, even by those who until then never claimed to be religious or 'very much' devoted Jews.

Heinz Bock '[At Hay camp] I had the opportunity to observe the missionary activities by some of the Christians, assisted by converted Jews. They were particularly active amongst the young boys who were more assimilated than others, because, whilst still in Germany, they had lived and grew up in the homes of Christian well-wishers. They knew nothing about Judaism or even of being Jews, about which they were reminded when they came to England as refugees and when subsequently arrested and deported to Australia.

'Realizing the danger of conversion and baptism, I decided to act immediately to combat it. The first step was to organize a Jewish community which, in addition to religious services, would also promote Jewish cultural activities. There was no shortage in assistants as many of my friends shared my fears and willingly offered their help. In particular, aid was extended by Hans Hammerstein, the leader of the Zionist group who was indefatigable in his leadership and the organization of cultural functions. In the camp, he did the heaviest and least popular jobs and, at the same time, conducted Hebrew classes. It is thanks to him that I have learned my language. It is ironical that, although, as a child, I attended a Jewish school in Germany, I never came into contact with Hebrew. The Jewish problem was brought home to me not through books or lectures, but by living facts.

'Who is to blame for all the sufferings which befell us? The Jewish authorities in Berlin, who warned us against emigrating to Shanghai? or the English, who greeted us as friends and treated us as enemies? or the Australians who, according to their instructions, looked upon us as enemies? or someone else? Nobody is to be blamed but ourselves. We refused to accept the existence of the Jewish problem and saw in Theodor Herzl (those of us who knew about him) a false prophet. Those of us who did know about Zionism insisted that it was a theory giving the anti-Semites an opportunity to advance their attacks on us. Only we, ourselves, carry this great guilt and cannot be absolved from it. The realization that we have never been Germans came too late. We were blind to the fact that we were generously tolerated only because it suited the German hosts. When the German Nazis saw that we did not understand that they considered us to be a burden to them, they then blamed us for all the troubles and misfortunes which befell them. Since concentration camps were not enough for the Germans to be satisfied with, they decided to exterminate us Jews and partially succeeded.'

Hans Hammerstein 'The tiny Christian group was soon able to establish firm contacts with the churches in Australia, and received substantial material assistance and high Christian priests and other notables visited them.

'Naturally we Jewish internees were so numerous that the Jews of Australia could not, so far, do much for us. I did not know how many Jews lived in Australia at that time, but we did know that a large number of them were so-called "enemy aliens" like ourselves. They had to be glad to live in a country without the "war psychosis" which caused our internment in Britain and subsequent departure to Australia. It may have occurred to them that it would be better if they were not too "conspicuous". However, the Secretary of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society did come to visit us. So did some Rabbis and all of them delivered speeches. The overall feeling amongst the Jewish inmates of the camp was that the non-Jewish prisoners were "better off".

'As a bolt from the blue, news was circulated that the Camp Commandant had promised to assign an unused hut to be converted into a church by the Christians. The news entailed an uneasy atmosphere. The Jewish religious services, whether Orthodox or Liberal, were conducted in the dining halls, before or after meals. Tables were moved to the corners of the halls before the services began and taken back to their required places immediately after the services ended. A special Synagogue did not exist. Therefore, the only official "Holy Place" in the camp would be a Christian church. It was a difficult situation. We did not want to protest for fear that such a move would be misunderstood as being "religious intolerance", against which we, as Jews, fought at all times.

'However, Heinz Bock, the leader of the Jewish Liberal religious community, told the Camp Commandant: "The number of Jews interned here is more than ten times the number of Christians, and if a hut is available for religious services, we should be able to have it". The Commandant agreed with Bock's argument and gave a "King Solomon judgement". The hut would be divided, half of it for the Jewish services and the other half for the Christians! But Heinz Bock refused to accept this decision. They argued for a while and finally it was agreed that one-third of the hut should be allotted to the Christians and two-thirds of it to the Jews. Everybody was happy at the end.

'Heinz Bock and his "congregation" used the Jewish part of the hut as a Synagogue on weekdays. He succeeded in obtaining a *Sefer-Torah* (Scrolls of the Law) from one of the Australian Hebrew congregations and one of the internees made a suitable Ark in which to keep it. Bock took upon himself the responsibility for having a

Minyan, a minimum of ten male Jews who must be present to be able to pray as a congregation at any time, thus enabling anyone who wanted to say *Kaddish*—a prayer after a near relative on the anniversary of his or her death—to do so. It was disturbing and unfortunate when loud organ music was suddenly heard from the Christians' part during one of the morning prayer services. It so happened that the Christian group obtained a parlour organ somewhere, and the man who played it stated he had no other time to practise, only during the hours of early morning (when the Jewish services were in progress). Yet, when Heinz Bock told him that the Synagogue choir would in future be practising during the period of the Christian religious services, the organ player found a more suitable time to practise without difficulty.

'Notwithstanding all honour and respect to all good Christians, problems still existed. The friendly attitude displayed towards the Christian group at the camp by the churches, the YMCA and many other institutions, followed by immense material help, raised its prestige amongst the camp inmates very high. Some so-called "periphery Jews" gave the impression of being sorry for not belonging to the Christian group. Moreover, two young Jews expressed their intentions to be baptised in the camp. They became friendly with a Mr Posener, a very intelligent man, himself a baptised co-internee, who eagerly pursued missionary activities. Nevertheless, the great majority of the Jewish internees and even the elected camp authorities (who showed very little interest in Jewish matters) requested the Commandant not to allow the process of conversion because the boys were too young to make such a decision themselves and their parents were far away. The Commandant fully understood the position and forbade any such conversion being performed.

'On the whole, the Christians were tolerant towards us, just as we, the Jews, were tolerant towards them. We were friendly and polite in our relationship to each other. When Christmas came, the Catholics and the Protestants united to celebrate it together and thus have a beautiful, impressive Christmas Party. Every non-Christian was invited to join the celebrations, and anyone who wished could participate in the Christmas Party itself, as well as join the choir for the Midnight Mass, so long as he had a good voice. The small Christian community in the camp could not muster a choir good enough for their liking. Strange, but true, a number of Jews decided to join the Christian choir for the occasion. Amongst them was a gifted (and intelligent) cantor. Heinz Bock, apparently, could not stand it and told him: "If you sing there 'Christ has risen up from putrefaction' then you can no longer be our cantor." It worked. The cantor withdrew from the choir.

'Heinz Bock was an example of devotion to his congregation. He not only organized, but was always first to perform any duties, whether these involved physical work or administrative tasks. He moved tables, benches and chairs. He was the president, the secretary and the beadle. Whenever or wherever it was necessary, he engaged himself in welfare work. When Bock knew that someone became sick and was admitted to hospital he wrote the sick man letters and sent him parcels. He requested others to do the same. They were small parcels, containing some chocolate, cigarettes and the like, but they did wonders for the sick men. Whenever he knew that someone was completely destitute, Heinz Bock managed to arrange a "loan" out of a fund that he had established, together with other internees. He performed such tasks tactfully and humanely. To illustrate Bock's approach to matters of personal welfare, suffice to say that at times he succeeded in influencing the paymaster-sergeant to make a payment to an internee saying that the amount had arrived for him but, unfortunately, the slip with the name of the sender was lost. The recipient of the money never learned that it came out of the Jewish congregation's special fund.

'Bock organized an *Oneg Shabbat* [a function held on the Sabbath devoted to study, literary topics, community singing and the like] every Friday evening. We sat together, sang songs, told stories, discussed current events, etc. We the Zionists, whether religious, observant or not, participated in the Synagogue activities. We found in these an expression of general Jewish solidarity, which, we felt, must be cultivated at all times, everywhere. I remember one of the first *Onegey Shabbat* when Bock invited several "intellectuals" to it. He asked them to plan a programme for a few such evenings in the near future. As it happened, none of them knew anything about such functions so they in turn asked Bock: "How do you think they should be?" To which Bock answered that if he knew, he would not have asked them to prepare the programmes, but would have done them himself.

'When Heinz Bock made up his mind to do something, being convinced it is good, he did not stop until he had achieved the task he set out to do. Thus, he urged and pressed all those who knew to contribute for the realization of his idea about a continuous *Oneg Shabbat*. The result was that every Friday night after the usual evening meal, someone delivered a short lecture, spoken in simple language, another internee read a story or a tale he had prepared for the occasion, and these were followed by various Jewish, Hebrew and Eretz Israel songs in the form of community singing. Every such *Oneg Shabbat* was more successful than the previous one. Their standard was high and all the participants had the satisfaction of an hour or

two of Jewish animation and encouragement in an atmosphere of togetherness within the internment camp in which we—the "Liberals"—were only the minority.

'As a matter of fact, a number of groups very active in social, cultural, religious and other activities, each acted in accordance to its own life philosophy. Thus, the Jewish Religious-Orthodox group, for example, had its own Kasher dining hall. A number of us (Liberal Jews) ate Kasher food only and were thus under the influence of the Religious-Orthodox group and had to conform with their way of life. The Religious-Orthodox were, of course, responsible for observing all the customs and ordinances which in turn created the general atmosphere. This group contained some outstanding Rabbis and scholars. Moreover, the isolation of an internment camp conduced them to surrender themselves to religion, which would be inconceivable anywhere else. Some internees who had never before been religious or observant became *Hasidim* (righteous, pious, devout, charitable and the like). They grew sidelocks and beards and danced most ecstatically.

'Numerically large was the group of the so-called assimilationists who did not want to know or hear anything about Jewish motives, causes or aims, let alone Eretz Israel. "Yesterday" they were German, now they are English, tomorrow they will claim to be Americans. There was also a substantial number of intellectuals and artists—musicians, painters, actors, writers, politicians and such others. They chose to live apart from others in a couple of separate huts. There was also a group of communists and extreme leftists politically. It consisted of both Jews and Christians. They tried very hard to convert other internees to their ideology but with very little success. On the whole, it was a many-sided and many-coloured society. As to myself, I belonged to the Zionists.'

Erwin Lamm 'On arrival at the camp in Hay, the religious-orthodox internees, observing *Kashruth* (Jewish dietary laws), were placed in huts separate from others. It was not long before the inmates of each hut elected a hut leader and gradually the routine of everyday life was organized. Naturally, we insisted that all food be *Kasher* and as Elhanan Loebenstein, one of the internees, was a qualified *Shohet* (ritual slaughterer), it was he who took over the responsibility for the required *Kashruth* supervision on our behalf.'

Alfred Bruner was also appointed one of the *Kashruth Shomrim* (to watch that the food was being prepared according to Jewish dietary laws) in the kitchen. At the same time he used every opportunity to learn tailoring in order to know at least a little of a trade which he thought could be useful to him later.

Elhanan Loebenstein 'There were about 300 internees who declared themselves to be Jewish-Orthodox-Religious and therefore required *Kasher* food. They elected Mr Lissauer as their spokesman. It was not long after this that we had a visit by the Jewish Chief Chaplain of the Australian Army, Rabbi J. Danglow, but it was a most unpleasant experience. Our request to him to arrange the supply of Kasher food for the orthodox-religious Jews was flatly refused. Such an attitude by a Jewish Rabbi was most frustrating and we could never understand the reason for it.

'Fortunately, however, Rabbi L. A. Falk, also a Chaplain in the Australian Army, visited us soon after and he was most willing to arrange the supply of Kasher meat and other items. He addressed the camp inmates in Yiddish, a language which many could understand, and thus made us feel that we were not completely lost, somewhere in the desert.

'Moreover arrangements were made for me to leave camp once a week, under military guard, to slaughter lambs, sheep, calves in the nearby town in accordance with Jewish law (*Shehitah*). Each time I was accompanied by Rabbi J. E. Ehrentreu and Rabbi Shaul Shaffer who supervised my performance and, to a certain extent, assisted me. But I was never allowed to keep the *Haleph* (the knife used for *Shehitah*). It was always given to me when I left camp to do the *Shehitah* and taken away when I finished. A soldier with a rifle was always on guard whilst the *Shehitah* and *Bedikah* (inspection) took place. The various guards who accompanied us on our weekly journeys to the slaughterhouse, which was a most primitive tenement, soon realized that we were completely harmless. As soon as we arrived at our destination, the guards went to sleep and we woke them up when we heard the approach of the military truck coming to take us back to the camp.

'In the camp we had our own Kasher kitchens with separate utensils for milk and meat. It was not easy, at times, to keep all the precepts of the Jewish law but we managed, and this fact alone gave us the satisfaction and the encouragement to continue hoping for a free and better life in the near future. There were, however, a number of amusing incidents which occurred as a result of our insistence on living within the precepts of the Jewish law. As an example, I recall an episode on the eve of *Pesakh* (Festival of Passover). A few days before the holiday, the group of observing Jews requested the camp authorities to issue them with new cooking and eating utensils because, according to Jewish tradition and law, no bread or anything resembling bread could be eaten during *Pesakh*. Moreover, the dishes or utensils used during *Pesakh* must not have been used previously for any other food but only for food which was or is *Kasher* for *Pesakh*.

'If new utensils, dishes, cutlery, etc. cannot be obtained for *Pesakh*, it is permissible under certain conditions to cleanse the old utensils and dishes in a specially-lit fire or in boiling water. Having been refused new utensils and various dishes by the camp authorities, the Religious-Orthodox internees made a big bonfire and placed in it the various kitchen utensils and other metal dishes. The soldiers on the watch-towers, having suddenly seen the fire, became alarmed, thinking the internees were rioting and were trying to burn down the camp! A number of soldiers came running to the bonfire and demanded to know the reason for it. After receiving the explanation, which was not easy because of language difficulties, the soldiers quietened down, and finally requested us not to make the bonfire too big!

'Some very religious *Yeshivah-Bahurin* (students of Talmudic Colleges), removed labels from the military woollen blankets, suspecting the former of having been made of linen which, therefore, makes the blankets *Shaatnez*![1]

'Since the internees were short of warm clothing and many of them had none at all, some wrapped themselves in their woollen blankets when the cold winter arrived. The Orthodox-Religious young people wore the blankets like a cape by cutting a hole in the centre, to enable the head to be put through it. But they had to cut off the corners of the blankets and thus avoid putting *Zizit*[2] on them. The Religious-Orthodox internees had cut the corners of the blankets notwithstanding the fact that in modern times *Zizit* are put on prayer shawls and special small four-cornered garments worn under the shirt. It only typifies the fact that a pious Jew will endeavour to live according to the Jewish law under all circumstances.

'Also, on days when *Selihoth* (penitential prayers) had to be recited, on fast-days and particularly during the month of *Elul* (the last month of the year) and during the first days of the month of *Tishri* (between the New Year and the Day of Atonement), over two hundred internees used to assemble in one of the huts to pour out their worries and troubles. The *Selihoth* prayers were held in the very early hours of the morning, sometimes soon after midnight. At first the guards became alarmed by the prayers recited aloud by over two hundred men. They again thought it was some kind of riot or demonstration. It was not easy to explain to them the Jewish Religious-Orthodox ways of life, but gradually they became used to Jewish celebrations of holidays, festivals and even fast-days.'

1 *Shaatnez* is a material or garment made of wool and linen mixed together. According to Jewish tradition and custom, use of any article made of *Shaatnez* is forbidden.

2 According to Jewish law (Numbers 15: 37-41): 'Make tassels on the corners of your garments and put a blue cord on each tassel . . . the tassels will serve as reminders . . . remember all my commands and obey them . . . turn not away from me to follow your own wishes and desires . . .'

'Tragedy, comedy, indifference and melancholy', were some of the main elements in the life of the 2000 internees. This was the recollection expressed by Dr Hermann Maschke, a former judge in the courts of pre-Nazi Germany, and verified by the recollections of other internees. Whereas in England they had at first been refugees, then enemy aliens, and finally internees, in Australia they were considered as Jews by the local authorities.

Hammerstein, who never claimed to be religious, regarded the Orthodox Jewish group, rather than his own Liberal group, as the best organized in the camp. There were also Catholic and Protestant groups and it is interesting to note the reaction of various internees to each of them.

Hans Hammerstein 'The Jewish orthodox-religious group was most efficient in many ways. Those who belonged to it were well organized and, at all times, whether aboard the *Dunera* or in camp in Australia, gave their utmost to keep *Kashruth* (Jewish dietary laws), observed prayer times, and hardly ever stopped studying. As soon as they were more or less settled in the camp at Hay, they organized a "real synagogue". Since the English people always respected religious life, the Camp Commander agreed without hesitation to allocate to the orthodox-religious "congregation" a kitchen in which Kasher food could be prepared and a separate dining room. No meals were started or finished without the singing of the traditional blessings and "grace before meal" and "grace after meal", which were most impressive. Also, the community prayer services conducted three times daily, were highly dignified and drew men who usually never attended religious prayers.

'Some of the Rabbis among the internees as well as Talmudic scholars succeeded to establish in camp a real *Yeshivah* (Talmudic College). One of the most active Rabbis in this respect was Rabbi E. Ehrentreu, formerly of Munich. The studies at the *Yeshivah* were attended not only by those who already were familiar with the Talmud and relative subjects, but also by some young and not so young internees who availed themselves of the opportunity to become acquainted with some of the highest forms of Jewish learning. The lack of a sufficient number of books of *Gemara* (Talmud) or *Mishnah* (collection of oral laws which forms the basis of the Talmud, completed by Rabbi Yehudah Ha-nassi in the latter half of the second and beginning of the third century AD, or any others, did not stop Rabbi Ehrentreu and other teachers from conducting the various classes, to instruct and to teach as well as to guide the discussions which is one of the ways to expound the meanings of such subject matter.

'The Liberal Jews held their own religious services. Whether on *Shabbat* (Saturday) or on Holy Days, the services were conducted in the tradition of the German-Jewish Liberal movement. The leader of this group was Heinz Bock who, thanks to his devotion and organizing ability, succeeded in organizing a real Liberal *Gemeinde* (congregation) which not only held its own religious services but was also engaged in cultural social and welfare activities.

'We were fortunate with the study of the Hebrew language, the prime subject in the regular study groups. The study of Hebrew attracted the largest number of students, the reason being not only because there was an inner urge to learn and know the language, but also on account of the excellent method of teaching evolved by a highly experienced teacher, Shalom Lomas. He was not only an expert teacher of the Hebrew language but also an extraordinary man. His explanations were as clear as crystal. No doubt, being a mathematician, he was naturally precise. In addition, his general knowledge was superb and his uncompromising devotion to Zionism made him passionately attached to Judaism the philosophy of which he gave his own interpretations which, at times, yielded him much trouble.

'Shalom Lomas spent his childhood in an ultra orthodox environment. His educators forbade him to read any books but the ones they used for teaching, whether Talmud or anything associated with it. Hebrew Grammar or books on modern Jewish thinking were not known to him until much later. The result was that Shalom Lomas developed an inner enmity and hostility to everything orthodox-religious. But when the proposal to form a Jewish military fighting unit was discussed, Lomas was one of the first to volunteer. He said, he is prepared to give his life but not his soul. He could not be persuaded to enter a synagogue, not even to witness a marriage ceremony of a friend.

'Although, I myself or many of my friends were not religious or observant, nevertheless, we attended the synagogue services to demonstrate our solidarity with the Jewish people. We felt happy to know that Heinz Bock was successful in organizing religious services notwithstanding all the difficulties he had to overcome. But, in the eyes of Shalom Lomas, we were "inconsequent petty bourgeois". The paradox of the situation was that *The Tanakh* (Bible), particularly *The Tehilim* (Psalms) were near and dear to him. He used to say that in order to understand them, it is essential to feel the man who strives, searches and speaks to us through the lines of the Bible. His lessons were unforgettable. He was able to make us feel everything said in these books.

'Yet, when we organized an evening devoted to "The Jewish Song", Lomas refused to enter the hall. He remained outside and listened to

the songs and items performed, through an open window, although he loved the Jewish songs. The only reason for his behaviour in such a manner was that we sat in the hall with our heads covered, in respect to the performers who were orthodox-religious. When we met after the end of the performance, Lomas said angrily that "you have surrendered to the orthodox and have thus sold us".

'The bitterest attack on us by Lomas was on *Yom Kippur*. All of us, believers, orthodox, non-believers, indifferent—all went to synagogue on that day and on the night before. Even many Christian internees did likewise. We all dressed carefully, the best way we could and attended the services on this most solemn day of the year, in the Jewish calendar. The only one, to the best of our knowledge, who did not attend services on that day was Shalom Lomas. Not being religious, *Yom Kippur* meant nothing to him. It was just another day. He did his laundry and other day-to-day chores. As the laundry had no walls, only a roof, all passers-by could see Lomas at work, and many orthodox-religious internees were furious. They even threatened to "kill" him. The Rabbis at the camp, however, were successful in inducing the zealots to ignore the whole episode on the year's holiest day. As days went by, the anger evaporated and gradually the whole matter was forgotten by some and put aside by others.[3]

'Although, as I told earlier, we had a number of study groups, lectures, etc., people in general were indifferent. They preferred playing cards or just loafing. Very often we had to invent some provocative topics to bring people in to lectures. On the other hand, such an attitude among people who were interned far away from their homes, families and friends, without anything specific to do, was nothing exceptional in the circumstances. At the same time, however, there were groups of internees active in their own way, directing their operations particularly against Zionists or any Jewish National groups and ideologies, whether secular or religious. These were the Communists and to a lesser extent, the Socialists. The latter had a circle of their own and had a notable influence on our young people. There was also a *Hehalutz* group (pioneers specially trained for agricultural and other manual work in Eretz Israel) whose experiences with the Nazis instigated their ways of thinking. They were convinced that the only real anti-Nazis were those who belonged

3 When Hammerstein reached Eretz Israel, he and his party of ex-internees were taken to the *Beth Olim* (hostel for new immigrants). A few days afterwards an impressive man, wearing a thick white moustache and thick white hair, arrived, and asked to see Shalom Lomas, who was one of the group. He wanted to take Lomas into his home. The visitor was the Hebrew poet Shaul Tchernichowsky, who had known Lomas in Berlin. Lomas assisted Tchernichowsky in translation and Hammerstein believes that one third of the translation of Homer's *Odyssey* into Hebrew was the work of Lomas.

politically to the extreme left. (They did not realize that the infamous pact concluded by the extreme left—the Soviet Union—with Nazi Germany, in 1939, sparked off World War II.)

'However, having escaped from Hitler's Nazi Germany to England, the young *Hehalutz* members had the personal experience how the British Liberal thinkers have caused their internment and subsequent deportation. To their astonishment, they were informed by the representatives of the World Zionist Organization that no assistance could be given to them with regard to their expected migration to Eretz Israel. Having become disillusioned from all sides, they turned to the Leftists hoping they would solve their problems. As time went on, our Zionist group proved to be not only most earnest in its declarations, but also most dedicated to the ideals it enunciated.

'When the socialist group wanted to attract the attention of a large audience, it usually announced some topic which was attractive to many internees but which, at the same time, it was never intended to present. As an example, it was once announced that Karberg, whom everyone knew as an old Vienna journalist, would speak on "Personal memories of Dr Theodor Herzl". The hall was packed to capacity. We Zionists came en masse, anxious to hear personal recollections about the great thinker and leader. But when Dr Karberg stood up to speak, his first words were about a "small error" in the announcement. The topic, he said, should have been announced as "Vienna in Herzl's times". He apologized for the error, and also admitted that he knew very little of Herzl. He did work as a very young journalist on the daily newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* and once, but only incidentally, he happened to be in Theodor Herzl's office when suddenly the great man entered. Herzl, already a famous writer and the undisputed leader of the Zionist movement, had asked him how he liked being a journalist. That was about all the lecturer could tell us of his "Personal memories of Dr Theodor Herzl".

'A strong opposition to many Zionist activities came from a substantial number of the orthodox-religious group. They hardly ever appeared at Zionist meetings, and personal contact with them was very weak, although many of our Zionist group had their meals in the Kasher Dining Hall. As an example, I will mention an incident connected with a collection of money for the *Keren Kayemeth Le' Israel.* When some young religious-orthodox militants learned about the collection, they blocked the entrances to their huts declaring "We shall not allow collections in our huts for a fund which assists *Taref*-eaters (those who eat non-*Kasher* food) to settle on Jewish soil". Had there been close co-operation between the Zionist and the orthodox-religious internees (Zionists or non-Zionists), the whole camp would have benefited spiritually. As an example, there was nothing or very

little Jewish in the good theatrical performances and other such activities. Also, in my opinion the camp school suffered likewise.

'Such a state of affairs worried me. I decided to have a meeting with the Principal of the camp school with the view of trying to convince him of the importance of giving it the maximum of Jewish essence and Jewish character. As I was not successful in my endeavour, I suggested the establishment of "Jewish Faculty", to which he agreed. He even proposed I should be its head, to which I agreed. I arranged a suitable "opening ceremony" and there I delivered a speech on the ever-changing content of Judaism. I myself was surprised how surprisingly interesting and dramatic the topic proved to be and how attentively the audience listened to what I had to say.'

A contrast to the life at the Hay internment camps can be found in a letter which was received from one of the internees who had been returned to Sydney from Hay as soon as they all arrived at the camp, then put back on the *Dunera* and transported to Bombay. There, this group was given its freedom.

Document 'A Letter from Bombay', *The Boomerang,* 16 May, 1941.

'I suppose there have been quite a lot of stories going around the Camp as to where we went and why we came here, etc. The truth is that I don't know any more than you do. We came on the *Dunera* again and were told that we would probably go to Bombay where we would have to change the boat, and from there go back to England. Well, as you see we did not change the boat, but stayed here.

'Bombay is not such a nice town. One of us has already left for Newfoundland, and two or three others are only waiting for their papers to be transferred to go to America. I have got a fairly good job. Not that I earn much, but being the only European in the woollen mill, except for the proprietor who is English, I have got quite a good standing . . . At the moment I am in charge of the whole mill during the night shift . . . The main factor is that I am a European . . . This job is the one advantage I have so far had in India. Anywhere else I would have been a simple apprentice, here just through the chance of having a white skin I am the "burra sahib" as it is called.

'There is not much more to write about Bombay. It is so boring as I have never seen another town before. There are only five or six picture houses here where they play English pictures. Well . . . It is always better than being interned in Australia with no pictures at all . . . there is an acute shortage of girls. This is another reason why I would not advise you to come here.'

The reminiscences of ex-internees themselves have made it clear that their eight months internment at Hay was marked by an intensified group life—truly, 'a small working republic'. The Hay period was also marked, however, by a slow and very partial process of contact with the main centres of Australian society, and by a more relaxed set of official attitudes. The process of de-segregation was strictly limited: the basic status of the internees remained what it had been since the outbreak of World War II in England. The most important factors in their slightly improved position at Hay, apart from their own protests such as 'The Dunera Statement', were the beginnings of contact with the Jewish communities of Sydney and Melbourne, and the arrival in Australia of a liaison officer from the British Home Office, Major Julian Layton. Layton's arrival signalled a change in British policy which had its effects more immediately in Britain itself than in distant Australia.

Robert Kahn 'We had reached Australia in circumstances somewhat reminiscent of those pertaining to the hapless passengers of Captain Phillip's First Fleet. Virtually all the inmates of camps 7 and 8 were accorded a "theoretical" release by the British Home Office. It was their official recognition of "regrettable and deplorable mistakes", as they had been described in the House of Commons. It must have acted as some balm on their souls, and enhanced their standing in the eyes of the Australian authorities responsible for keeping them caged up behind a triple fence of barbed wire. No doubt, it triggered the mission of Major Julian Layton, but in terms of immediate practical and tangible realities, the only effect of theoretical release was an ex-gratia decision by the military authorities to allow the internees to send to the outside world more than two letters a month. Henceforth, they could write any number of letters, but the censorship imposed on all outgoing and incoming mail remained as heavy-handed and unsympathetic as ever.

'Moreover, the censors, whether of their own accord or acting on instructions from authorities higher up, played some dirty tricks from time to time. For example, when a Jewish organization in Melbourne arranged with some girls in the community to initiate pen friendships with young Jewish internees and thus brighten a little their being in captivity, the censors returned all their letters with a curt annotation that regulations forbade prisoners-of-war to receive fan mail. I learned about this a few years later when, at a Jewish social function, in Melbourne, I asked a pretty young lady for a dance. On hearing my name, she told me about writing to me in camp at Tatura, hoping to become a prospective pen-pal, since the record indicated that like herself, I was interested in higher education. It is still galling to recall

how this narrow-minded attitude had stifled the innocent pleasures of correspondence that could have established the warmth of a human relationship and made some internees feel less as prisoners or exiles.'

Asher Joseph 'Apparently, the Nazi Government in Germany knew about our internment and, for some reasons, did not make any distinction between us and German prisoners-of-war. German Red Cross representatives even inspected our living quarters. They also arranged exchange of mail, via Geneva in Switzerland, with those of our relatives who were still living at the old addresses in Central Europe. This particular service continued until the beginning of the year 1942.[4]

'When the Jewish communities in Melbourne and Sydney and, later, in London and New York, learned about a curious bunch of Jewish prisoners interned somewhere "down under" for no fault of their own, we, at last, began to receive visitors.

'Then, the most unexpected news arrived. Mr Benzion Patkin, a leader of the Australian Zionist Federation, informed us of the availability of immigration certificates to Eretz Israel. About the same time, a small number of internees were allowed to leave the camp to do temporary work in orchards and factories to assist in the war effort. The latter action was taken mainly as a result of endeavours by Mr Moshe Feiglin of Shepparton, a small city near the Tatura Camp, in Victoria.

'As time went on, conditions in the camp changed for the better. Contacts with the outside world increased. Also the food improved greatly, as we were given full Australian Army rations. Moreover, thanks to the availability of the Eretz Israel immigration certificates, small groups began to leave for the Holy Land. The group to which I was assigned left in July 1942. Many of the internees who sailed for Eretz Israel were Orthodox-Religious. A substantial number amongst them were students of Talmudic colleges. Likewise, a large number of those who migrated to Eretz Israel were *Halutzim* (pioneers) who received special *Hakhsharah* (training) for work on agricultural settlements. There were also Zionists of old standing and amongst them doctors, lawyers and other professionals.

'Conditions in general, in Eretz Israel, were known to be difficult. The war fronts were closing on all sides. At the same time, the British Government, having acknowledged the errors it had made *vis a vis* the Jewish refugees, now internees, invited them to return to England. In due course many of the internees did return to England.

4 One German Red Cross parcel to arrive at Hay included underwear, which was useful, and chocolate wrapped in paper decorated with swastikas.

But many others succeeded, with the help of relatives and friends, in obtaining immigration permits to the United States. But the large majority of the internees remained in Australia, where they were absorbed in Australian industry, commerce and professions.

'Some of the internees had to wait nearly six years—as in my case—to reunite and marry in one or another part of the world. This episode is one of many instances of faith and optimism displayed by "Prisoners-of-Hope" who had time to reflect and study whilst planning a better and spiritually more rewarding way of life.'

At the time of writing, Asher Joseph, who had lived in Eretz Israel since 1942, was Editor-in-Chief, Customs and Tax Publications; International Correspondent, Department of Customs and Excise of the Government of Israel; and Chairman of the Jerusalem Branch of the Israel Union of Editors of Periodicals.

Erwin Lamm 'Many of the internees had looked forward to reunions with friends and relatives who had been lucky enough to arrive in Australia long before the outbreak of World War II. But those in Australia had not learned about their friends and relatives, the internees, until many weeks after their arrival. One of the first official Jewish representatives to come to us was Mr Brand, the General Secretary of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society who, in the presence of the Australian guards and the Australian officers, told us very plainly: "We Australian Jews certainly don't want you here!" We, the internees, definitely did not expect to hear such statements from a Jew, a Jewish high official of a Jewish institution.

'One of the Jewish Chaplains visited us during the festival of *Hanukah* (Festival of the Maccabeans). On seeing the very big wooden *Menorah* (lamp to hold the candles) made by some of the internees, he said enthusiastically, "One day this Menorah will be placed in the Museum in Melbourne", to which we replied that we were more interested to be in Melbourne ourselves than to have the *Menorah* in the Museum.

'My relatives in Melbourne included a sister. When she finally received a permit to visit me in camp, we could not kiss each other, not even shake hands. We could talk to each other only in the presence of a military guard. No fraternization of any kind was allowed.

'When, much later, we were offered to volunteer for service in the Employment Labour Company, an auxiliary of the Australian Army, a substantial number of internees availed themselves of this opportunity. The first to join the Labour Corps were those who had decided to remain in Australia after the war ended. I was one of them and, like hundreds of other Jewish internees, we of the Orthodox

Religious group were fortunate in having as our commander in the Employment Labour Company, Captain J. Broughton, a Maori officer who was most sympathetic to our needs and helped us in every possible way. He even succeeded in arranging for the orthodox-religious members of the company to rest on Shabbat (Saturday) and work on Sunday whilst the others, the not so observant, worked on Saturdays and rested on Sundays.'

Kurt Fischer 'Thanks to the first contacts with representatives of Australian Jewry, I was able to find, with their help, the address of a cousin of mine, who had lived in Melbourne for a number of years already. As a result I was able to correspond with my cousin's family, and they began sending me parcels containing most-needed necessities. Later, I experienced a joyful moment when I received, through the Red Cross, a letter from my wife in Germany.'

Hans Hammerstein 'We began to receive letters from outside. One of the first such letters told us that our friend Hirsch, who had escaped internment in England, was dead. Friends who had left London because of the bombardment had permitted Hirsch to stay in their apartment. He was killed when the house was destroyed during the height of the Blitz.

'We tried desperately to establish contact with the world outside, to obtain help for our release from unjust and illogical captivity, but even the Australian press gave a wrong and even hostile impression about our situation. Headlines like "These Men Are Dangerous" in Australian newspapers made the public think that our internment was justified. Moreover, such headlines frightened friends and acquaintances of many inmates who lived in Australia and were not interned. They were afraid that letters or other means of contact with the internees might be detrimental to their own security, hence their unwillingness to write to us or even to answer our letters.

'One of the internees was pleased to obtain the address of the former Rabbi in his home town in Germany, at that time living in Melbourne. He wrote to the Rabbi but received no answer. He then wrote again, and this time he received a letter in reply from the Rabbi's mother. The lady stated that her son was really sorry not to be able to write to him but hoped he was well.

'Our Christian co-prisoners were, however, in a better position. They could write to their churches and religious institutions which had nothing to fear and extended to those internees most valuable assistance.

'But wherever there are shadows there must also be light. Completely unawares, I received a letter from Martin, a teacher-

colleague of mine at a Berlin Jewish School, who had just learned about my being an internee in Australia, asking about my well-being and what I required for my immediate needs. I also received a letter from a Miss Susi Jotkowitz, whom I never met personally, but who I knew had become my successor at the Bonn Jewish School. Miss Jotkowitz also inquired about my health and my immediate needs, and sent me some books which, for the first time, really helped to prevent despair. A third letter was from a schoolgirl in Melbourne who, not many years before, had been a pupil of mine in the Stettin School. I was very touched by this unexpected friendly attention. At all times in the past, I had hated to be a *Schnorrer* (begging for alms) and I did not ask anyone for anything material. Consequently, it was a pleasure to feel there were friends who had offered help of their own accord. Finally, I even discovered a relative of mine, a cousin of my wife,[5] who lived in far Queensland and sent me bed linen so that after a year I could, at last, sleep in a more civilized way.

'It was about this time that an official of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society visited the camp for the first time. Our impression was that we, the internees, were like wandering beggars in his eyes. I approached him with a question whether he could assist us in obtaining immigration certificates to Eretz Israel. He replied (over the shoulder and in a manner that anyone, like me, who heard him say it, will never forget) "I am not interested in Palestine in any way", and left. The fact was—we had no "status". It was not clear who or what we were, or who might "protect" us. The Consul for Switzerland in Melbourne was the protector of German prisoners-of-war and other Germans. He visited us, but many of the camp inmates refused to accept his help because we were refugees from German oppression. The Consul replied that he fully understood our viewpoint and did not wish to intrude himself upon us. However, he said, should we require anything from him in the future, he would, at all times, be at our disposal. The Red Cross could not speak on our behalf either.

'But our clothes were worn out and there was nothing in sight to replace them. We complained to the authorities. Although aware of the situation, it took them nearly six months before they issued us with some outer garments made of blue ticking material (as if we were mattresses), adorned with thin metal buttons. We were also given hats of an impossible shape and glaring red cloaks. At first, we refused to wear them, though gradually we got used to them. At the

5 Hans Hammerstein's wife was a niece of David Wolfsohn, one of the first associates of Dr Theodor Herzl and his successor as president of the World Zionist Organisation. The wife and the children were eventually deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz where they were exterminated in the gas chambers.

time we looked rather curious, something between convicts and cardinals.

'Soon after we received the camp clothing, several cases of clothing arrived from the Swiss Consul, sent to him by Germans living in Brazil. We wrote to the Consul pointing out that this clothing was, no doubt, meant to be given to the Nazi prisoners. The Consul answered that we might be right, but he had decided to send it to us and would not take it back. In the end, we wore this clothing too.

'Meanwhile, a number of British parliamentarians of all parties had attacked the Government for interning and deporting Britain's best friends, whilst Hitler's motley friends went free. Major Cazalet, particularly, was outspoken, saying that he would not be happy either as an Englishman or as a supporter of the Government until this bespattered page in Britain's history had been cleaned-up and re-written. In those days the internees were not allowed to receive newspapers; but we could receive books and one of them, *The Internment of Aliens* by F. Lafitte, made a profound impression on all of us. I am full of admiration and most thankful to the author and to the publisher who so vividly described and so vehemently criticized the British Government's policy whilst the Nazi bombs rained down on London.

'We had often remarked that totalitarian Governments would never permit such queer administration, to do what the democracies had done—to intern their real allies. But after learning about the outcry in the British Parliament and the British press, we had to admit that such a measure of free speech and criticism for the sake of justice and admission of error, could only be possible in democracies. Henceforward, the expression "mistakes have been made", was often heard. Moreover, it was during our internment that H. G. Wells' *The Outline of History* was printed as a pocket book. He described what had happened to us on its last pages: "A cruel and violent persecution of the very people to whom Britain should have looked for aid in her fight to restore Europe to freedom . . . Eager enemies of National Socialism and Fascism were interned under most horrible conditions; separated from their wives and families, deported, many were driven to suicide. In her glorious past . . . Great Britain had stopped the slave trade. Now, a shocked world demanded to know whether England had forgotten if all this talk of democracy was no more than a pretence."

'The public outcry against the internment and deportations brought in its wake a Government White Paper, followed by investigations of the internees' treatment by the officers and guards aboard the *Dunera,* and finally a court-martial and punishment of those responsible, and retribution, whatever that may have been. But

in addition to the public outcry, there were also individuals, not necessarily people in high positions (such as Viscount Cecil, Gilbert Murray and the Archbishops of Canterbury and Chichester), who acted on our behalf. As an example I shall mention good old Mr Wickham Pagett, one of the teachers in Sandwich, who having been shocked by the "general" internment, refused to believe that we were the people robbed of our freedom and deported to Australia. He ran from office to office, offered every possible guarantee, and finally obtained a release order from the Home Office. The latter informed me that I was free to return to England, but I refused to do so, explaining that my goal was Eretz Israel.

'Our first hopes of release, derived from some of the paragraphs in the White Paper, were soon dissipated. The White Paper read in part: "He who can prove he has fought against Hitler". How could one prove it? Should we have asked for a written statement from the Nazis prior to leaving Germany? (An additional remark said: "To prove that Hitler had been against you, that you have been in a concentration camp is not enough.") Another paragraph said: "Famous personalities should be released" (maybe even England felt it a disgrace to keep Freud or Einstein in a camp?). Yet, many famous writers, scholars, actors, musicians, and painters who were amongst the internees were unknown to the English Civil Servants who had to decide about their release. There seemed to be a ray of hope for engineers and technicians, when we read a reference to "special abilities or knowledge in fields of importance to the war effort". But here too was disappointment. Because, although there were such men, they had to have additional qualities which, it was thought, Britain was lacking.

'One of the most promising paragraphs in the White Paper read, "He who has a visa to enter a foreign country . . . Police will escort him to the ship, so that he can leave the Empire." Some already had the "Affidavits" from relatives or friends in the United States and could, perhaps, have obtained the visa; but they could not appear before the Consul as no leave on parole was permitted. Moreover, the United States Government ordered that no one who was not free unconditionally, wherever he might be, could be given a USA entry visa. The USA's way of thinking was: "England does not trust them and wants to throw them onto us!" For us, the internees, it was all so very simple: "No freedom without a visa—no visa without freedom."

'Consequently, the only way to get out from the internment camp was in one particular clause: "He who volunteers for the Pioneer Corps, will be taken back to an internment camp in England and, if his offer is accepted, he will be directly transferred into the Military Training Camp". The feeling amongst the internees was that in their

helpless situation, the British were using a thumb-screw on them. Although the internees were angry, many of them could no longer bear the life within the barbed wire fences and preferred to "volunteer". Nevertheless, the White Paper had other psychological effects. Depression gave way to higher spirits. It also had a psychological influence on the Australian officers and soldiers, whose attitude to us became much friendlier.

'Our "self-government", which was not interfered with by the camp authorities, had its own offices or departments, such as labour (and payment for it), emigration and release, legal, claims-for-damage-by-robbery and others. We even had our own "policemen", under our own control, a law court, a bank with its own money printed and designed by internees, a library, medical and dental stations, also a hospital where our own doctors treated the internees. Only in more difficult cases were our sick sent to a military hospital. We also had a library in the camp as well as a Synagogue.

'We had excellent theatrical performances. Officers and soldiers of the guards were always invited to view them and they enjoyed every bit of them. Naturally, either because of the language (German was mainly used on such occasions) or because many of them had not even heard of the plays, their meanings or the authors, we had to explain the gist or substance to them. The actors were excellent and all enjoyed such functions. Nevertheless, it was a pity that, for some unknown reason, hardly any Jewish plays were performed. Meanwhile, the attitude of the guards towards us became very friendly and, whilst some of the internees were impressed, others, myself included, took their behaviour as a matter of course and I thought it was rather belated. After all, we hadn't done anything wrong, but had suffered injustice.

'It so happened, one day, that we were being "counted" once again and, for that purpose, had to pass between two soldiers, one of whom laid his hand on everyone who passed. One internee, I'll call him Becker, said to the soldier: "Please do not touch me". The soldier complained to the Commandant and the latter requested our spokesman to take action in the matter, whereupon, arrangements were made for a "court" to be held. There were judges, prosecution, defence and witnesses . . . We, the internees, were the plaintiff. We asserted that the man's behaviour spoiled the good relations with the guards. The soldier himself agreed to appear as a witness. Becker denied any intention to hurt our interests. "On the contrary", he claimed, "he had protected the interests of the internees, by insisting on good manners being exercised by the soldiers. They, the soldiers, must realize that we were not convicts, but civilized, honourable, unfairly interned men." Becker was ordered to pass between the

soldiers and he did so. We were impressed. The soldier in question was asked if laying of a hand or hands on an internee was part of his orders. The answer was negative. Then the prosecutor, Dr H. Rothfels (if I remember rightly) who eventually became a political writer or editor in the *Bundesrepublic*, asked the soldier: "Would you have behaved in a similar manner in a German concentration camp?" Becker interrupted: "I strongly protest against the insult to the British Empire by comparing it with Nazi criminals". In the end, all became good friends again.

'It was by accident that, one day, whilst still in the camp near Hay in NSW, I saw a letter written on a letterhead of *Wizo-Ivriah* (Women's International Zionist Organisation called "Ivriah"—a Hebrew woman), Sydney, addressed to one of our men, a camp inmate. I had a suspicion the man in question had begged for something. I always hated *schnorrers,* but on this occasion, for some unknown reason, I hoped he received what he asked for. The letter was written by the President of *Wizo-Ivriah*, Mrs Ricki Cohen, in reply to the letter received from the inmate in the camp, and I was struck by the words: "My heart is so much with all of you . . ." A most humane soul. I suddenly knew what I was looking for. I decided to write to this noble lady even if it meant to *schnorrer* myself. I asked for a tooth brush, tooth-paste, pencil and paper.

'Never again did I ask for anything, but my correspondence with Mrs Cohen grew to a life-long friendship. (Some years later, following my release and subsequent emigration to Eretz Israel, I joined the Kibbutz Beth-Zerah, in the Jordan Valley, and Mrs Ricki Cohen, whilst visiting Israel, was my guest there for several days.) At the time of our internment, Mrs Cohen was the editor of a Wizo journal and being a militant woman Zionist, she was fearless in her editorials and expressions of opinion she believed in. Mrs Cohen wrote about us in her Wizo journal, fought the Australian Jews' reserve and timidity to stand up for us and, at the same time, she also mobilized material help for us. "Those men are your brethren", she wrote, "they must have the same and not less necessities as you and I have."

'After I wrote to her that we had no books to study Hebrew, Mrs Cohen simply "ordered" her members to hand over every available Hebrew book for the purpose and the result was that after a short time we received several large parcels containing books as well as clothing. The latter was most useful to us. But, as to the books, blessed be Mrs Cohen's soul! We had to suppress our sense of humour. It was apparent that neither dear Ricki Cohen nor her good ladies had the faintest notion about the Hebrew language. (I had the suspicion that the same applied to her other friends—Jews in the

"diaspora of Sydney".) The impression was that the well-meaning ladies had made a good search of their homes, especially the attics and the cellars, because, instead of Hebrew study books, of which not one copy was received, the whole cargo contained old prayer books, old collections of *Hagadoth* (stories of Exodus from Egypt); one book *Tze'enah U-Re'enah* (a Yiddish rendering of the Five Books of Moses Pentateuch together with *Haftaroth,* the weekly portions from the books of the Prophets, a number of books in Yiddish, including a *Hevrah-Kadisha* (burial society) booklet, explaining how to behave with a dying or a dead man.

'But the jewel from amongst all the books, and I have kept it since then, was a Pentateuch in five tiny volumes, printed in Amsterdam in the year 1725 for Sephardic Jews, with explanations in Spanish of the Jewish calendar and Holy Days. One of its early owners inscribed his name on the inside cover in old-fashioned English and Hebrew. (It was only in the mid-seventeenth century that the Jews were allowed to begin to return to England and they certainly could not afford then to have a printing press of their own.) How strange and, at the same time, quite natural that such Jewish books should travel from Amsterdam to England, then to Sydney, followed by a journey to Hay in New South Wales, from there to the Kibbutz Beth-Zerah in the Jordan Valley and finally to Nahariyah, near Lebanon, where they are at last read again and fully understood. But far more important than all the fine and useful gifts, was the kindness and affection displayed by their senders. We no longer felt forsaken. We knew of kind hearts who thought about us.'

Kurt Fischer 'An important event which occurred was the arrival of Major Julian Layton, the accredited representative of the British Home Office, who was to act as Liaison Officer in all matters concerning the refugees-internees. This appointment was a result of a report compiled by a special committee elected by the internees ("The *Dunera* Statement') and transmitted to the British Authorities through the Camp Commandant's office. The report contained details concerning our treatment on the *Dunera* and everywhere else since our internment in England, and ended with a request for complete rehabilitation. One of the first messages Major Layton conveyed to us, the internees, was that the British authorities acknowledged us to be Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression. Therefore, we should be classified accordingly and be given the opportunity to return to England as free men.

'The alternative, to be released in Australia, did not yet exist, because the Australians looked upon us as "boarders". The internees, however, received the offer to return to England with mixed feelings.

The reason was simple. With the U-boat campaigns, war on Allied shipping had intensified, and a sea journey to England at that time was many times more dangerous than the voyage aboard the *Dunera* to Australia a year earlier.

'Meanwhile, the heat increased and the only place to escape from it was under a cold shower. This was always available. The showers were situated in a rectangular structure fenced and roofed with corrugated iron. Chairs were put up at its sides and thus we acquired a "beach resort" for the camp. Personally, I preferred a hot shower which was available elsewhere in the camp, but this could only be used at certain times of the day. We later learned that infrequent hot showers were much healthier than frequent cold ones. The frequent cold showers resulted in a number of cases of rheumatic fever. On the other hand, the heat produced a few coronary cases.

'But every cloud has its silver lining—the internees who became sick were taken to a holiday resort, high up in the mountains [Orange in NSW]. There they were well looked after and speedily recovered. Meanwhile, notwithstanding all the dangers of a voyage to England at that time, about 400 internees decided to accept the offer, as conveyed by Major Layton, to return to Britain. I was amongst them. The opportunity to get out of the internment camp and thus to be free again, outweighed all other considerations. Inwardly, however, I hoped the journey to Britain would not eventuate for the time being, at least. I had the intuition that another alternative would be found.

'Some time later, the group which had decided to return to England was transferred to another camp near Tatura, Victoria, about 200 kilometres north of Melbourne. There were trees, grass and hills and, on the whole, the place looked like a holiday resort compared to Hay. The barracks in the camp were subdivided into cabins, separated from each other by walls made of masonite. Each cabin had a separate entrance, contained a small table, two chairs and two beds and also had a window. It was cosy. The washrooms were adjacent to the bathrooms, which contained white bath tubs, and each of us was allowed to have one hot bath per week. It seemed almost like an unreal luxury after all we had in the other camp.

'Tall trees were growing between the barracks. Except for a footpath, the whole ground was covered with lawn. The food was good, tasty and plentiful. We also had lots of opportunities for exercise and quite often we left the camp, together with soldiers, to pick up food or materials required for work at the camp. These were excellent opportunities to look at the surrounding country.'

Fr Walter König 'Most of the difficulties and problems . . . were solved with the arrival of Major Layton, the liaison officer appointed

by the British Home Office. His arrival was an outstanding diplomatic success . . . In an interview with the Major, I saw that he was well disposed towards us . . . The next task the Major undertook was the shifting of the camp to the south . . . Already some 300 people affected with heart diseases had had to be taken to the sanatorium at Orange west of the Blue Mountains . . . Then came the long-awaited order to dissolve the camp at Hay and to move to the healthier Tatura in Victoria.

'We took leave of Fr Stokes and Fr Carroll . . . also of the tough but good-natured guards and the sergeant-major, a former trooper in India whom I had once seen sitting beside a crying boy trying to cheer him up . . .'

Document 'Camp 7 Before Dissolution', by K.A., *The Boomerang,* 16 May 1941.

'Those of the inhabitants of Hay who sat on the fence opposite Hay Station on the morning of 7 September 1940 saw a procession of "Prisoners of War", pale, half-starved, clad in rags and with hardly any luggage, being marched to a desolate looking camp. Those inhabitants (if any) who will sit on that fence one day in the near future will see something rather different: there will be a procession of sunburnt, well-fed (sometimes overfed) and well-dressed Refugee Internees, also known as Mistakes, marching back to the Station, with piles of luggage following behind.

'Is it merely better food and clothing that have wrought that change? You will expect me to answer "No, it is also the spirit of Camp 7". If I did say that you would not be any wiser. For what is the Spirit of Camp 7?

'Put briefly, it is a combination of Oi-Wie-Bitter-ism, and So-What-ism. Or, in plain language: realization of our helpless situation, and defiance in the face of the unalterable.

'We have made the best of a bad job. Whether as a Camp Leader, or as a kitchen hand, or as a Librarian, or as a half-day "volunteer", we worked in the knowledge that our position was admittedly bad, but that it rested with us to make it as pleasant (or as little unpleasant) as possible.

'The management of the Camp School and that of the Recreation Department have received public recognition often enough, for making our life more pleasant. The Camp administration has less often been mentioned in this connection, and the other regular and voluntary workers have hardly ever been thought of from this angle. Yet it was only through everybody's sense of cooperation and tolerance that the smooth running of the camp was possible.

'Now that most of us are leaving, it is time for us to pat ourselves on the back for once and to say to ourselves: "We have made a good job of our life in Camp 7. Let us keep up this our Camp 7 Spirit for any future Camp (or any other disagreeable situation) in which we might yet find ourselves."

'So chins up, and let the inhabitants of Hay notice the difference!'

Throughout their stay at Hay, the internees and their spokesmen (a number of whom were highly experienced lawyers before the war) campaigned not only for release from the internment, but also for a minimal programme of resettlement in a more salubrious part of Australia. In addition to pressing their demands with Major Julian Layton, they appealed to the Australian Government which had the power to release them if it thought fit. One group of internees offered in 1940 to pay the Government up to £200 in advance if they could be moved to a town with a more moderate climate than Hay. A War Cabinet memorandum signed by the Minister for the Army, Percy Spender, opposed the request for reasons including: the establishment of a precedent for special treatment for internees; a likely slackness in security, resulting in the grouping together of a 'moneyed class' of internee; likely public criticism, with inevitable political repercussions; uncertainty about how the British Government would view such a move; and that the employment of extra guards would cost more than the savings through the internees' paying for their own upkeep.

Although the Australian Government declined this request in 1940, continued pressure upon both it and upon the British Government through Major Layton, backed up by Jewish and Catholic leaders in Melbourne, led in May 1941 to the removal of the Hay internees to Tatura in Victoria. At the time of their removal, the internees published and distributed an appeal for justice which demanded their release for useful participation in the war effort. This document was also a reminder that twelve months had passed since their original rounding-up by British authorities.

Document **An Appeal for Justice and Humanity,** 12 pp. roneoed, May 1941 (extracts only)

'In these days of May 1941, 2100 refugees from Nazi oppression, interned in Great Britain and transferred to Australia, see pathetically pass the first anniversary of their internment. Such a day gives us the right to raise our voices and to make them heard, even if they are bound to be faint . . .

'What charge is brought against us—and what makes us deserve months after months of life behind barbed wire, separation from

wives, children, parents and friends, severe restrictions in our connections, by the repeated wreckage of our existence and stigmatisation by prolonged detention?

'The vast majority of us are refugees of Jewish denomination or extraction, others are veterans in the political arena of the fight against Hitlerism.

> 'We appeal to you with the full confidence of innocent men, beseeching you to restore to us the first right and essential of every human being OUR FREEDOM . . .

'On the very day when HMT *Dunera* started its ill-famed voyage with 2100 interned refugees, from Liverpool, a debate took place in the House of Commons with regard to the unjust and often harsh policy of internment. On this day, 10 July 1940, Mr Peake the (then) Under Secretary of State, stated, "I should like to pay my tribute to these refugees in that they have shown themselves worthy of the confidence which we placed in them". In the many following debates on this subject, the (then) British Minister for Home Security and Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, admitted on 23 August 1940 that "Regrettable and deplorable mistakes" had happened in connection with our internment. On 3 December 1940, Mr Herbert Morrison, Home Secretary, promised a revision of our cases "with great speed" and stated that mistakes had been made in regard to internees sent to Canada and Australia.

'A White Paper, dealing with our internment, was issued, on 31 July 1940. On 5 August 1940, the internment camps in England were transferred from military to civil administration. As a consequence of this White Paper, already in the beginning of December, 1940, about 8000 refugees, and since then many thousands more, were allowed to leave the British camps as free men . . . Thousands of our brethren joined the Pioneer Corps of the British Army, and they can be found on every battle front. We are receiving many letters from England saying our friends are proud to be recognized as allies. Their enthusiasm, devotion and eagerness is publicly acknowledged with gratitude . . .

'Why is the position of these refugees transferred to Australia so different? Why are we suspected to be enemies and not recognized to be allies? Why are we still—one year after our internment—kept behind barbed wire?

'The fundamental reason and true answer seem to lie in the agreement which was made between the British and Australian Government, regarding our internment. Whilst the Commonwealth Government apparently undertook to receive prisoners of war and Nazi internees or Fascist sympathizers for the duration of the hostilities whom the British Government was to have returned after

the war, 2100 innocent refugees, victims of Nazi persecution, arrived here, whose mass-internment was later on admitted to be a mistake. The Australian Government, well within her rights, as far as the responsibility between the two Governments is concerned, insists now that the clauses of this unfortunate agreement are strictly upheld.

> 'But what does a clause in an agreement matter, if the freedom of so many, innocent and allied men, imprisoned for more than 12 months, is at stake? . . .

'Australia's kind reception and humane treatment of refugees from Nazi oppression is an honour to her name and tradition. The Commonwealth is one of the countries who signed the Evian Convention, made to alleviate the predicament of these unfortunate people to give them asylum, where they could enjoy again the fundamental rights of a human being.

'May we, after one year of detention and in our great distress, appeal to the noble spirit of this Convention and even venture to state frankly that our internment is contrary not only to its spirit, but also to the wording of several of the Convention's articles . . .

'Several weeks ago, the Home Office sent a Liaison Officer, Major J. Layton, to Australia. Owing to his good efforts, about 180 selected cases, mostly married men, had the opportunity to return to England.

'In accordance with the British policy, which now for many months regards us refugees from Nazi oppression as allies, Major Layton invited the fit men between the age of 18 and 50 to join the Pioneer Corps of the British Army. In the neighbourhood of 500 men followed this call. This is, in view of the great number of children, old and ailing men among us, a considerable percentage.

'However, what is to become of the rest of us, whose status is identical to the recruits and who are also anxious to "do their bit" for the Common Cause?

'Now, the skill and capabilities of the engineers, scientists, doctors and experts in our midst, are rotting behind barbed wire. What could be more noble, in view of the shortage of manpower, also more advantageous to the Australian war effort than to usefully employ our unused potentialities to the fullest extent in the fight against our oppressors? If we were allowed to participate in the common effort we would cease to be a burden and problem but become an asset to Australia . . .

> 'Is it not paradoxical that we, on the one hand, are invited to join the British Forces, and are, on the other, still regarded and interned here as "enemy aliens" and even subjected to the same Camp Rules of Prisoners of War?

'These Camp Rules issued by the Group Commandant of our internment camps, on 1 March 1941, state i.a.:

> '1A The holding of political meeting or meeting at which any political propaganda is used, or Nazi or Fascist principles recommended, advanced or urged, is strictly forbidden. The Nazi and Fascist salutes will not be permitted, but Internees or Prisoners of War will be called to, or will stand to attention at all times when being addressed by an Officer or NCO of the Australian Military Forces, or when an inspection or Roll Call is being held.
>
> '5 The exhibition of Nazi or Fascist emblems, signs or engravings within any compound is prohibited.
>
> '15 The victimization of any Internee or Prisoner of War holding anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist views, or for any other reason, is prohibited.

'It is deeply depressing for us refugees to be surrounded after one year of internment and after being fully rehabilitated in Great Britain, by such an atmosphere of distrust.

'In addition to the above mentioned Camp Rules "Army Field Censorship Regulations" are applied to us. Whilst we do not believe that this is due to a deliberate political gesture, we are at a loss to understand the reason thereof.

'The "Army Field Censorship Regulations" hamper our efforts towards the solution of our problems. Cables may not be despatched at all and airmail letters, which constitute the only practical means of remaining in contact with, and of advising our families, only under exceptional circumstances and with special permission. In Camp No. 3, Tatura, letters written by the Section Leader to the American Consulate General, Sydney, dealing with vital subjects as to our emigration have been kept back and were returned only after 3 to 4 months. Communications from the Australian-Jewish Welfare Society, Sydney, did also not pass the local censorship and were delivered only after a few weeks. There, letters were even rejected, when the local censorship of Camp 3 thought their contents not to be appropriate or expedient. The "Army Field Censorship Regulations" stipulate furthermore that we are not allowed to write on behalf of other internees. This also applies to questions in regard to our release and emigration and naturally proves to be very disadvantageous. Our communications have to pass two censorships: not only the "District Censor" but in addition the local censorship . . .

'Whilst we know that, fundamentally, Australia is not responsible for the difficulties with regard to our unfortunate position, we wish to be allowed to express the hope that the Commonwealth will realise our true status as allies. And as a free country—irrespective of

regulations applied to, but not made for us—refrain from withholding freedom from us, victims of Nazi oppression.

'We have borne the hard fate of mistrust with calm dignity for one complete year. Our undeserved sufferings caused by the separation from our families, the repeated wreckage of our existence are too evident to be stressed.

'We know that right is on our side, and that a free Commonwealth of Nations, fighting against barbarism, the right is ultimately bound to be victorious.

'Our problem is a British problem—a problem of Justice.

'We confidently trust that we will not remain to be singled out from the benefit of Justice and Humanity.

> 'With the confidence of the innocent, we appeal to you not to deprive us any longer of the first rights of human beings: *of our* liberty.'

CHAPTER 5

Internment at Tatura[1]

Fr Walter König 'The trip [to Tatura] was quite rapid: over the Murrumbidgee River, through endless plains, past enormous wheat fields and forests of light eucalyptus trees, amongst which you could spot every now and then a homestead, towards Camp 2 . . . We saw signs of life only seldom, a solitary farmer driving his tractor, flocks of sheep, a mob of kangaroos or emus.

'The first thing that struck us about the new camp was the complete change of scenery and climate. The camp was situated in a lonely, rolling landscape. On the left shone the surface of a dam, surrounded by silent pine forests. In front of us on the right, there was more pasture land studded with big eucalyptus trees. An irrigation channel some distance away brought water from the lake to the fruit plantations of the Mildura [in fact, Shepparton] district, and continued on further to the Murray River [Goulburn]. A lovely sight which reminded me somehow of the Black Forest in far-away Germany.

'The sunsets were, it is true, not so aflame with glory as at Hay; but they were still magically beautiful, and above all the temperatures were bearable. Here, too, for the first time, we observed the fascinating spectacle of the Southern Lights. However, we still could not do without mosquito nets, and there were still, around the camp, snakes and poisonous spiders hidden in the rank grass which had to be burnt down from time to time by the soldiers. Nevertheless, we felt immensely relieved and soon recovered from the hardships in Camp Hay, thanks to the healthier climate and the better conditions of life we enjoyed.

'To avoid any inconvenience at Mass, my first concern was to secure a hut of people I could trust—Catholics and their Jewish friends, lawyers, doctors and businessmen amongst them—who

1 Tatura is 16 kilometres west of Shepparton, which is 180 kilometres north of Melbourne. 'Tatura' refers to a series of internment camps not just the camp of the group from Hay. There was a camp for German and Italian POWs, and a camp of married couples evacuated from Singapore on the *Queen Mary*.

would guarantee an atmosphere of mutual understanding and friendship . . .

'Very soon the routine of camp life began anew . . . The lectures and language courses of the camp school, the theatrical productions, musical performances and sport competitions began where they had left off. New courses were added, and thus I prepared Jewish youngsters for their matriculation, while continuing to treat literary and religious themes as well.'

Erwin Frenkel was not taken to the Hay internment camp. He and his group were taken off the *Dunera* in Melbourne and transported directly to the camp in Tatura. This particular group comprised Nazis together with anti-Nazis, many of whom were Jews, and a number of internees from Singapore, most of whom were Jewish. The request of the Jews and the anti-Nazis to be separated from the Nazis was something which the camp authorities fully understood, and the separation was made almost immediately.

Erwin Frenkel 'I was never hungry [at Tatura], supplementary delicacies could always be purchased at the canteen. The food was later improved still more, as a result of a German professional ship's cook taking over the responsibility for the preparation of all meals. On my first visit to the huts of the Orthodox-Jewish group, I noticed that their gardens, unlike those of other compounds, had some individualistic forms. They were round, triangular, square, oblong, and polygons. Most of the other compounds had their gardens according to a plan whereby they encompassed nearly the whole camp area. Generally speaking, many of the internees, irrespective of their ideologies and life philosophies, acquired a special love for gardening. Whilst I was visiting the Orthodox huts, I met there Felix Werder (formerly Bischofswerder) and his father who was the chief Cantor in the Great Berlin Synagogue. Felix was already composing music while in camp.

'Much later I was told about a substantial number of internees who migrated to Eretz Israel in the years 1942-3. Personally, I never knew about it as no one ever told me about such a possibility. We were offered a return to England but this offer was made shortly before our release to join the Employment Labour Corps. Naturally, a substantial number of the internees did avail themselves of the possibility to return to England.

'My first contact with the Jewish Community in Melbourne and, for that matter, in Australia was through meeting the Reverend (as he was called) Kalb who in those years was the Cantor at the Toorak Rd Synagogue—the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Kalb was many years earlier a pupil and a friend of my late father. When it became known to him that I, the son of his teacher in *Hazanuth* (singing of

liturgy or leading the prayers in a Synagogue) was an internee in Tatura, he hired a taxi to travel there for the special purpose of visiting me. It was wonderful for me to meet and to speak to Mr Kalb. There were moments when I forgot I was an internee in far-away Australia. We talked about his family and my family, and of the times when we thought Austria was our country and it would always be like that.

'I asked Mr Kalb to tell me about the Jews and the Jewish communal life in Melbourne. He had a terrific sense of humour and as he was telling me about his experiences and stories about Melbourne 'Yahudim' (derogatory name for Yehudim or Jews), he practically had me rolling on the floor laughing. But the introduction about some Jews as given by Mr Kalb to me, helped me a lot later when I was released from internment as well as in the coming weeks, at meetings with visiting dignitaries. One of these was Rabbi J. Danglow who, on his first visit, delivered what I learned later to be one of his standard "God, King and Country" orations, in the monotone of an English gentleman. He looked magnificent in his uniform of a Jewish Chief Army Chaplain. Rabbi Danglow's speech was reproduced in our next camp variety show. The sketch went like this: "My dear brethren, it breaks my heart to see you suffer like this. I cannot bear it and, therefore, I shall not come again!" He kept his word and did not come again! But on the occasion of the first visit, he distributed twenty hand-rolled cigarettes (taking them out of an ornate silver snuff box), some chewing gum and some small chocolate bars.

'Later, we received some second-hand clothing, *Siddurim* (prayer books) and *Talitot* (prayer shawls), also a small *Sefer-Torah* (Scrolls of the Law). About the same time, when regular services were instituted, it was suggested that I should be either the *Hazan* (Cantor) or *Baal-Koreh* (Reader of the Scrolls of the Law). I refused, saying that not being a *Shomer Shabbath* (an observant and Orthodox Jew), I was not the right person to perform these duties. But my protests were of no avail and so I was Cantor throughout the remainder of my internment at Tatura.

'But I was also active in trying to earn some urgently needed money. I therefore organized a kind of Viennese style coffee house. I managed to obtain some wire out of which I made "toasters" and for one penny I was able to supply toast with coffee, but the latter was extra. About that time, I also became a student of mechanical engineering as well as a student of jazz orchestration.'

Hans Hammerstein 'At first we were sad [about Tatura], although geographically it was a better location and a much better climate. But

we did not know what a change in fortune was to bring us this change of place. The first thing I did after arrival at the Tatura internment camp was to write a letter to the Australian Zionist Federation situated . . . in Melbourne, complaining at the fact that they have not shown any interest in the Zionist group's problems. It was not long when I received a letter in reply, signed by the Honorary Secretary, Benzion Patkin, explaining that they knew nothing about us until very recently and would do everything in their power to help us. He fulfilled his promise . . . The fact was that all our future destiny, release from internment, and *aliyah* [migration to Eretz Israel] have been the result of his activities.

'Benzion Patkin visited us very often and we felt from the first meeting with him, that we had someone we could call a brother, who worked for our rescue and freedom. Letters began to arrive from Jerusalem, London, and other places. Zionist and Hebrew books which Patkin obtained from the World Zionist Organisation, he transmitted to us without delay. And thus our studies of Hebrew and other preparations for *aliyah* were no longer a dream.

'Another important event which occurred . . . was the arrival of the official representative of the British Government . . . We were surprised to learn that this particular person was the former Director of the Kitchener Camp who was then a Captain and now, one year later, wore a Major's uniform. His main duties, we were told, were to investigate the robberies, pilferages and destruction of the internees' property when aboard the *Dunera*, and to assess what should be a reasonable and just compensation.

'Every internee had to fill out a claim, but how one could assess the cost of a suit worn only three to four times or of a precious stamp collection, or of a manuscript, a work of a lifetime, or of an important scientific treasure, or an opera which could never be repeated, or of personal belongings? Major Layton told us "Please understand that I am no longer your Camp Director, but a Government officer who has to carry out his orders". At first, the Major refused to accept a number of claims. Later, however, we were informed of the British Government's decision to pay two-thirds of all the originally declared damage and losses.

'The Major's office, established in the camp soon after his arrival, was continuously crowded with applicants. The majority of the applications were for release from internment. The Major listened patiently to every internee and tried his best to explain that the only way to obtain release from internment at that time was to volunteer for the Pioneer Corps. He also accepted applications for some elderly and married men to be returned from internment, to England where they could be re-united with or at least be near their families.

'A few succeeded in being released for special work in Australia. One was an optician, another was an engineer, a third was an anthropologist and a known expert on Aborigines. The latter was, if I am not mistaken, Dr Adam, who went direct to the university from the internment camp.

'Rumours of all kinds were spread from time to time amongst the internees. Once there was a rumour that Benzion Patkin had been called upon to advise the Major about intending release for certain internees. As I learned afterwards, the advice was only in connection with applications for emigration to Eretz Israel . . .'

Kurt Fischer 'The Tatura camp was much better organized than the one at Hay. There was a bank which issued camp money with which one could purchase various things at the local canteen. There was a large common room with a stage on which a theatrical group gave fine performances and a quartet and other musical groups gave very fine concerts.

'I soon became a member of the very active Zionist group which organized lectures, community singing, Hebrew lessons and other cultural activities. My first Hebrew teacher was Hans Hammerstein but when I was transferred to the advanced class, the teacher was Shalom Lomas. I also joined a school for painting, conducted by Robert Hoffmann from Vienna, who was concentrating mainly on portrait painting. I also worked with Moses, a farmer from Germany who occupied himself in the establishment of a landscape garden which became one of the camp's focal points. This occupation in the open air, with bushes, flowers, and all sorts of greeneries, gave us—the farmers—great satisfaction.

'One day, as I walked along with a shovel and a broom over my right shoulder, dressed in overalls, I came across Hoffmann who looked at me and said: "I must paint you just as you are now". And thus, in addition to many other occupations, I became a model in the painting school. I spent many hours on the stage in the big hall, standing or sitting, posing in positions demanded by Professor Hoffmann, whilst the students were sketching or painting. Finally, I was presented with a memento: a portrait of myself standing in work clothes, with a shovel and broom slung over my right shoulder. It was done in pastels but the same portrait in oil can be seen in an Australian art gallery, together with other paintings produced by the internees at the Tatura camp. Whilst I was on one side of the stage, acting as a model, a quartet was practising the "Moonlight Sonata", I recall, a few metres away from me. I must confess that the music helped me a lot to kill the monotony of acting as model.

'Throughout this period of internment, the camp authorities insisted on a strict discipline. It was forbidden to get near the barbed-

wire fence. Every day after breakfast, barracks had to be cleaned and floors washed. The inspection of cleanliness was most thorough. Every internee had to be shaved, neatly dressed, and stand to attention next to his bed on which the blankets had to be folded according to the military manual. Then came the roll-call . . .

'Paradoxically, the military camp guards themselves neglected at times the discipline which they mostly succeeded in imposing on us refugees. On one occasion, a sentry on the watch-tower began firing into the camp. Fortunately no-one was hurt. But when the sentry was brought down from the tower he was found to be as drunk as ever a drunkard could be. He did not realize what he was doing. Although the authorities were strict about discipline with regard to internees in general, they were tolerant to religious freedom and observances as practised by various groups. When some *Hassidim* engaged in dancing and gradually got into a fiery passion, their loud singing and foot stamping did attract attention but no action was taken against them.'

Hans Hammerstein 'As time went on, we began to notice the Camp Commandant looking as if he had a few drinks too many. It was then that he was particularly good-natured. This latter characteristic became evident not long after our arrival at the Tatura camp. And this is what happened. Amongst the internees who belonged to one of the orthodox-religious groups was one by the name of Yaakov Hess, a simple good natured man who loved people and who was much respected by the other internees. At that time, the spokesman of our hut was a certain Dr Lowe.

'On the evening of May 11 1941, when all of us were already in our beds, Dr Lowe returned to the hut from the usual inspection outside and having closed the door behind him, called out: "Gentlemen, the commander is drunk again but this, as you know, is not something extraordinary. The fact is that never before did I find him as drunk as he is tonight."

'"What do you mean, has anything extraordinary happened?" many of us asked.

'"Yes", answered Dr Lowe. "I went outside to see if everything is in order and I met the Commandant near the hut. 'Good evening, sir', I said to him. 'Any news?' I asked him, 'Oh yes', he replied, 'Hess has escaped!'"

'"That is impossible Sir", I said. "I saw him myself only less than an hour ago."

'"If I tell you, you must believe me. It is a fact. I, myself heard it on the radio ten minutes earlier," the Commandant said.

'"But how and when did he escape?" I asked. "By plane", answered the Commandant. "But they caught him."

'"Where?" I asked.

'"In England", was the answer.

'"Can anyone be more drunk than the Commandant is, if he tells such stories?" asked Dr Lowe.

'Next morning we learned that our Yaakov Hess was, as usual, in the religious hut but that Rudolf Hess flew from Augsburg in Germany, landed in Scotland near Glasgow, hoping to persuade the British to make an immediate peace with Nazi Germany.'

Some months after arriving at Tatura camp, Kurt Fischer was one of a group of volunteers for repatriation to England. This group had a bizarre experience. They were ordered to prepare for transfer to another transit camp, taken to Melbourne by train, thence to Murray Bridge on the Murray River in South Australia. From there they went north to Renmark to an isolated camp with barbed-wire and soldiers with rifles at the ready, a situation reminiscent of the *Dunera*. They were searched and 'suspicious' items such as pocket-knives were removed from their clothing. After protesting to this particular camp's commandant the confused internees were told that there had been a 'clerical error': the commandant had been told to expect Italian prisoners-of-war!

In this camp near Renmark, South Australia, known as Loveday, Kurt Fischer learned for the first time of the possible availability of immigration certificates to Eretz Israel, and he dropped his intention to go to England. When a group of officers finally arrived to arrange the departure to England, he informed them that he had changed his mind, and he was returned to Tatura by the same route which had brought him to Renmark.

Kurt Fischer 'Meantime, we were given the opportunity to inspect the surrounding country. Soon afterwards, about forty internees accompanied by a sergeant and two privates, all unarmed, walked to inspect the water-pumping works. First of all we walked to a small village containing about a dozen little cottages, each with a garden in front, where some of the owners or occupants were working. The walk was mostly along paths which ran between rows of vines. Then we turned to a side path which ran through a vineyard, up a hill. After half an hour of walking, we reached the top of the hill from where there opened a most beautiful view of the surrounding country. After walking for a while along the ridge of the hill we reached the water pumping works. There, we were taken on a conducted tour through a big hall which contained huge generators and through rooms with pumps and, finally, the control centre. On returning to camp we made a detour which led us through beautiful citrus plantations.

'A few days later we endured one of the most frightful experiences provided by nature itself. Early one very hot morning, the clear blue skies suddenly turned yellow and the air became more and more oppressive. Then, without any warning, hell broke loose. A terrible storm blew up. I was tidying up in the kitchen when lightning and thunder struck together unexpectedly and fiercely. The rain came down as a deluge. It was so forceful that it redirected the smoke from the chimneys back into the kitchen, followed by water from above and from under the door. As the storm became more violent, the walls of the barracks rattled as if pulled and pushed by ghostly hands. Windows and doors flew open as the latches and catches could not withstand the force of the storm. Expecting the barracks to collapse, we crawled under the tables hoping for some protection from the falling ceiling and roof. However, just as the storm had broken out unexpectedly, so it began to subside and finally disappeared as if it never was. But when we finally left the barracks and were able to inspect them, we found some of them tilted to such a degree that they were dangerous to live in and therefore had to be abandoned. In addition, storage tents had been blown away. Washing that was on the line had completely disappeared. Only one towel could be seen hanging from one of the highest branches of a huge eucalyptus tree.

'The first group of internees who agreed to return to England left the camp in August, 1941. As shipping accommodation was made available, other groups followed. By the beginning of October, there were only about 70 internees who, for one reason or another, had decided not to proceed to England. On the day we left this camp to return to the camp near Tatura, a transport of real Italian prisoners-of-war arrived. Once again we were transported from Renmark by train to Murray Bridge where we arrived about midday. Our three escorts took us again to the same railway restaurant where we were served with a good meal by the same girls wearing the same green uniforms. Since we had to wait a few hours for the arrival of the overland express from Western Australia to take us to Victoria, the sergeant offered to take us into the township. We formed ourselves into a platoon and in military order, singing English soldiers' songs, we marched through the town with our sergeant at the head.

'We stopped at a little shop where the sergeant bought everyone cigarettes and lemonade. We were approached by a few townspeople who were curious to know where we came from, where we were travelling and the purpose of our journey. The sergeant said we were recruits and that our destination was a big camp in Melbourne where we were to be trained. When the express finally arrived in Melbourne, we were at first taken to the railway yard. It was a pleasant change to watch the bustle of people and trucks, loading and unloading all

kinds of goods. Also, the clanging of trams which we could see coming and going in all directions whilst packed with passengers; it was a beautiful sight we had not seen for over two years.

'A couple of hours later a number of military vehicles arrived to transport us and our luggage to Broadmeadows, which was, in fact, the largest camp we had seen in Australia so far. On arrival, we were ushered into a compound surrounded by barbed wire, and then into a barrack in which there were palliasses on the floor. A wash-room and dining-room were adjacent to the barrack in which we spent the night. A sentry was posted at the entrance to the barbed-wire enclosure. After breakfast we were informed that three of us, accompanied by a soldier, would be allowed to go into the city to do some shopping for all the group. This was rather a friendly gesture and we appreciated it.

'On the following day we were transported to Broadmeadows railway station, where we boarded an electric train which took us to Melbourne, to be transferred to another train on which we travelled through lush green fields, hills and forests and finally stopped at a small country railway station, to be taken from there to the camp near Tatura.'

As soon as Kurt Fischer arrived at the Tatura camp, he applied for an immigration certificate to Eretz Israel: 'I realised it was a very fundamental decision in my life, bringing me one step closer to a target which I had set myself a long time ago'. He also made an application for compensation for the losses sustained aboard the *Dunera*, as a result of the pilfering and wilful destruction by the guards. 'The English money', says Fischer, 'which I subsequently received after my arrival in Eretz Israel, was very useful since at that time I had no means other than my small weekly wage.'

One of the many factors which made the dissolution of the Hay camp and the removal to Tatura so fortunate was the existence in Shepparton, a provincial city close to Tatura, of a small Jewish community of agriculturalists and orchardists. Amongst them was the family of Moshe Feiglin, who were good-natured and Orthodox Jews, highly respected in the Shepparton district and well-known to the Melbourne Jewish community. Moshe Feiglin responded quickly to the presence of Jewish internees at nearby Tatura. His first thoughts were of Kasher food and other religious needs of Jewish internees. He arranged for Orthodox Jews in Melbourne to supply these needs where possible.

Elhanan Loebenstein 'Not long after we arrived in the camp near Tatura we began to receive Kasher meat and other foods through Mr

Moshe Feiglin in Shepparton. We were also visited by Rabbi J. L. Gurewicz and Rabbi Dr H. Freedman who, together with Mr Feiglin, supplied us with books of *Gemera*. Soon after, we were able to establish a small *Yeshivah* or Talmudic College in which a number of young men, especially from Czechoslovakia and Hungary, studied most of every day while they remained in camp. When the festival of *Pesakh* (Passover) was near, we received matzot and various *Pesakh* foods supplied by the brothers Leo and Max Newman of Melbourne. Some of the cultural activities already begun at Hay were renewed in the camp at Tatura. One of the most popular lecturers was Rabbi Dr H. J. Zimmels (originally from Vienna) who, after release from internment, returned to England and was subsequently appointed lecturer, then Principal of the Jews College in London. His subjects were mainly Jewish history and liturgy.

'As most of our *Tefilin* (philacteries, used mainly for morning prayers) were confiscated and lost on the *Dunera* or thrown overboard, the Newman brothers of Melbourne supplied us with as many pairs of *Tefilin* as they could find (one of the pair is used for the arm and the other for the head). Some of the very old and much used philacteries, I was able to repair. But since we could not obtain sufficient philacteries for all the internees who required them, some men used one pair in rotation. We also received a *Sefer Tora* (Scrolls of the Law), prayer books and other aids whenever these were required.

'Some months after our arrival in the camp near Tatura, we were notified that the British Government was offering a free passage to any internee who wished to return to England. About forty internees, out of some 300 who accepted the offer to return to England, were drowned when their ship was torpedoed whilst on the high seas. Amongst them were a number of the *Yeshivah* (the camp's Talmudic College) students. Meanwhile, the small Jewish community in Shepparton needed a *Shohet* (one who was specifically trained to ritually slaughter animals and poultry in accordance with Jewish Law), and Mr Moshe Feiglin who, at the time was its head, applied for my release to enable me to accept the position. Since my papers had been lost on the *Dunera*, Rabbi Dr J. E. Ehrentreu and Rabbi Shaffer each gave me a separate certificate testifying my *Smihut Leshehita* (ordination to be a *Shohet*) which enabled me to obtain my release from internment and accept the position of *Shohet* in Shepparton.'

Hans Hammerstein 'Heinz Bock who, some years before, had known very little, if anything, about Zionism and definitely considered himself a non-Zionist, now revised his opinions under the

influence of the events of the past years, and suggested that all our lectures, meetings and various study groups be conducted under the auspices of his "Jewish Congregation". This would ensure that a larger number of men listened to the expositions of ideas and participate in the discussions. Having consented to Bock's proposal, all our notices and invitations read: "The Jewish Congregation invites . . .".

'But Bock's "congregation" was supposed to be Liberal, not Orthodox, and since no more Liberal Rabbis were to be found in the camps, the services were conducted by Emil Frank, former headmaster of the Jewish school at Duisburg and cantor of the Jewish congregation there. The Friday evenings and *Shabbatoth* (the Sabbaths) remain unforgettable to us. The manner in which he conducted the initial services and his ability to make the congregants active participants in the joyful event of spiritual elation, produced in all of us an inner satisfaction which, unfortunately, could not be felt on other occasions in the times that followed.

'Emil Frank was a quiet and modest man. He never liked to "show off". He used his spare time to read and study and translated several poems of Bialik from Hebrew into German which were most impressive. Frank was not of the "eloquent clergyman" type, yet, because of his ability and knowledge, he succeeded in expressing and explaining what he, a poor prisoner like all of us, had found and understood in the various parts of the *Torah* (Pentateuch) in a manner that moved us all, his listeners. From Australia he returned to his wife and children in England. Later, the whole family, first the children, followed by the parents, emigrated to Israel and made their home in the Kibbutz Kefar Hanassi, in Galilee.'

Document 'On the Abyss' by Rabbi H. E. Blumenthal, *Australian Yiddishe Nays*, 5 March 1943.

'Not so long ago we read in the Australian press (Jewish and English) the following short notice:

> 'On the way to England a British ship was attacked by an enemy submarine and, as a result, amongst those who lost their lives by drowning were 40 Jews who were released from internment in Tatura, Victoria, to return to England. In fact, they were loyal subjects of allied countries.'

'The 40 interned Jews were my comrades and friends from Hay and Tatura. I see each and every one of them in my sleepless nights. It seems as if only yesterday we were together on the *Dunera*, packed into the small pirate-ship like herrings in a barrel, and in such a way brought to Australia. The same fate which befell each man on the ship

bound us with unseen ropes which could not be torn apart. The sufferings and torments we endured, formed us into a united brotherhood. Now I feel ashamed and guilty and stand here as a mourner for each dear family.

'With starry eyes we looked at the shores of Australia when we came near them, considering ourselves lucky to live up to that morning of the 28th August 1940 [when the *Dunera* reached Fremantle]. We were full of hopes. We believed in Jewish brotherly solidarity. We thought that the Australian Jewish community would be happy to fulfil the people's commandment of *Pidyon Shevuyim* [redemption or ransom of prisoners].

'To our great disappointment, the officials of the Australian Jewry have exemplified themselves like a bad stepmother, as if they had no hearts. No efforts whatsoever were made by the Australian Jewish community as a whole, to obtain the release of 2000 unfortunate prisoners at Tatura, who were left to their own fate.

'As against this, much interest in our fate and friendship towards us has been shown by the official Australian military and civilian authorities. Also, it must be remembered that special thanks are due to Rabbi J. L. Gurewicz for extending material help to us, which was later continued by the Jewish Welfare Society.

'Degraded and broken down did the 40 men fall into the abyss of desperation, in that abyss of hopelessness in which they, my 40 friends and comrades, have found their eternal rest.

'Let your meaningless deaths be a warning for all of us. Our consciences shall be clean, we shall not have to rip the hair off our heads and shall be able to call out "our hands did not spill this blood", with our heads held high.

'The Jewish Community in Australia will only rinse itself clean and, likewise, the death of the 40 individuals will have a meaning, if all of us together, will take immediate action to obtain freedom for their remaining friends and comrades who are still interned.'

Rabbi Dr H. E. Blumenthal was the first Orthodox-Religious Jew to be released 'on parole', to take up a position in the Bondi Synagogue in Sydney. Together with Mr A. I. Rabinovitch of Sydney, and with the assistance of other members of the congregation, he established the North Bondi Jewish Kindergarten which eventually developed into a primary school. Later he came to live in Melbourne where he was engaged by various educational institutions, but in 1949 he migrated to Cape Town in South Africa, and again he migrated with his family in 1952 to Jerusalem.

Rabbi Blumenthal led himself and others into a big error by accusing the Australian Jewish community as a whole of not making

any effort to obtain the release of the unfortunate internees at Tatura. The Australian Jewish community had as much possibility of intervening successfully on behalf of the internees with regard to their release, as British Jewry had to prevent their original arrest and subsequent deportation.

It is true that certain individuals, whether Army Chaplains of the Jewish faith, or responsible officers of some Jewish organisations, did little, if anything, to make the life of the internees more comfortable by supplying them with various comforts such as clothing, special foods and books. But others did much in this respect, even more than some anticipated.

The fact that Rabbi Blumenthal himself was the first to be released 'on parole', proves that some individuals, mainly Jews in Australia and in England, did something to achieve this kind of result. The same applied to Rabbi J. E. Ehrentreu, Elhanan Loebenstein and others. About the same time, groups of internees in the camp from which Rabbi Blumenthal came, were preparing themselves for *Aliya* (immigration) to Eretz Israel. Many others unfortunately took the risk of sailing to England, whilst hundreds volunteered to join the 8th Employment Company of the Australian Military Forces.

It is therefore wrong to blame the whole community because some individuals behaved as 'bad stepmothers', to use Rabbi Blumenthal's term. I think that I. H. Boas, Dr J. Leon Jona, Mr Bernard Cowen, Mr Alec Masel, Moshe Feiglin, Rabbi Dr H. Freedman, Rabbi Dr I. Porush, Rabbi J. L. Gurewicz, Leo Fink and others like them, exemplified themselves as most loving and devoted fathers to the internees.

At the Tatura camp the internees were given jobs and paid for their labours by a self-administered system of the kind which operated at the Hay camps. They were even permitted to use the money earned (in the form of cashable 'chits') to order various articles from shops in local towns. The young ('Baby-face') Alfred Bruner, for example, was able to save most of the money he earned from doing odd jobs, and other internees have referred to their particular camp 'occupations'. Alfred Bruner made clothing from old army blankets for other internees, and thereby earned the new nickname of 'the boy with the 28-day pants' (because destruction of Army property was punishable by 28 days in jail).

Throughout the second half of 1941 and most of 1942 the Tatura internees' camp possessed a 'certain measure of financial self-administration' but this was curtailed in late 1942 and early 1943 as the numbers of inmates dwindled rapidly. One document produced by the remaining internees said that they 'were allowed to use the profits of (their) canteen and of other camp institutions in a just and

fair way and with due regard to the wants of the camp, especially for the payment of "wages" to (their) workers and for welfare payments to (their) destitutes and elderly and ill people.' The following document describes the changes which took place about the end of 1942.

Document: Camp No. 2, Compound B, Tatura 'Statement II: Economic Questions' (pp. 1-2 'Former Financial Arrangements'), 7 February 1943, (extracts only).

'This state of affairs was not only a reasonable one, but also a matter of course in view of our special position as refugees from Nazi oppression. Whilst other internees are in the favourable position of receiving regular allowances from their Protecting Powers, the inmates of this camp are homeless and partly indigent people, having been robbed by the Nazis. Many of them call nothing their own but their capacity for work and any special skill they may possess. These indigent men permanently need some necessities as toothpaste, toilet soap, shaving soap, sewing implements, writing utensils, fruit, refreshment, postages, summer clothing, handkerchiefs, etc. On the other hand, there is amongst us also a small number of fairly prosperous people whose purchases of canteen goods go to increase the profit of our institutions. With these returns we were able to recompense the workers of this camp in some small measure and to support indigents. This system proved satisfactory for about two years.

'Our financial policy was a thoroughly sound and cautious one, thus, on 30 November 1942, we had a credit balance of £309. 9s. 7d. with the Paymaster, that was nearly £1 for every man then in the camp. Per 31 January 1943, our account showed a balance £231. 18s. 11d. which still means an amount of almost £1 per man.'

Robert Kahn 'The internees who arrived on the *Dunera* included a large number of academics and highly educated and trained individuals in many fields of scientific and cultural endeavour. At the same time, however, not all those who professed to hold such titles could have substantiated their rights to them. In particular, some of the older men, frustrated at their internment and shattered lives, romanticized about their past and tried to console themselves and to boost their personal standing and prestige with their fellow-internees (and probably with the guards too) by claiming the title of "Doktor" or something similar. But there were also others who scoffed at those who laid stress on the importance of being addressed as Herr Doktor or Herr something else. One of these, a sardonic cynic and also a little musician, by the name of Cohen, decided to wreak vengeance on all the real and imaginary Doktors in the camp.

'To begin with he would sidle up to his "victim" and whisper to him in German: "Listen, are you Doktor?" And if the martyr was unmindful enough to admit to such an honour Cohen would then hiss at him venomously: "Then you too can lick my arse". Cohen repeated his insulting action all over the camp and as a result, "Listen, are you a Doktor?" became a standing expression in the compound and its originator became known forever as "arse" Cohen.

'A Rover Scout group was organized in Hay camp 8. Later it continued its activities in Tatura. At first it consisted of about 30 members and was housed in two adjacent huts. The group comprised young men from 16 years of age upwards, most of whom had belonged to the Scout Movements in Germany and Austria before the Nazis came to power, whilst others were active in Scout groups in Britain prior to their transportation to Australia. But for some members of the newly-organised group, this was the first experience of belonging to a freely formed youth association, outside the jurisdiction of the internment camp authorities. There was no doubt that the good fellowship, the wholesome activities and self-discipline, as cultivated under the Scout's code, greatly helped those young men to live through their internment without degenerating or lapsing into slackness, boredom or idleness and apathy. It was significant that the Scouts were the only men in camp 8 who never failed to do at least half an hour of gymnastics every morning before breakfast, followed by a bracing shower.

'It was not long before, with the assistance of official channels of the Scout Movement, contact was established between the group at the internment camp and the Scout troop at Shepparton. The result was that the Shepparton troop began visiting the camp from time to time and a personal friendship developed between the two youth organizations. When such meetings took place, the camp authorities permitted the Scouts to meet their visitors outside the internment camp, sitting in a large circle, as though around a camp fire, with guards discreetly out of sight, during the hour or two of the visit's duration. It was at one of such meetings that the Scouts-internees heard for the first time "Waltzing Matilda", which the visitors sang for them. We responded with some German and Austrian Scout and folk-songs which were equally novel for the Australian Scouts.

'The credit for the organization of these visits should be given to the Reverend Kyte, the visitors' Scoutmaster, who paved the way for the friendly meetings between the two groups. It was he who explained most impressively to his charges that the internees were not Australia's enemies but innocent victims of wartime circumstances which were the result of the Nazi atrocities. It was not easy to explain, seeing that the Shepparton Scouts were young and unsophisticated

country lads. But thanks to his obvious sincerity and shining personal example, the good Reverend Kyte clearly and surely carried the day.

'Many films and books have emphasized the vast amounts of time and effort spent by prisoners-of-war in trying to escape from their captivity. The same could be said about the internees at Hay and later at Tatura, the only difference being that the latter tried to obtain their release by legal means. But humans are somewhat like canaries. The longer they are imprisoned, the more difficult it becomes to adjust themselves to freedom. As one illustration, I shall mention the attitude of the internees to the efforts of Major Julian Layton to obtain their release for whatever purpose or objective it may have been. During his initial visits to the camps, the authorities had a difficult task to restrain the many hundreds of internees who clamoured for an interview with the Major with the only objective in mind, and that was an early release.

'But as successive contingents were sent off, to return to England, to be released in Australia, to enlist in the 8th Employment Company, or to emigrate to Eretz Israel, the rush of applicants for release decreased, although many hundreds of men were still in camp. The situation when the "boot was on the other foot" was still more deepened, after the "non-enlisters" had found civilian employment in war industries. The time arrived when Major Layton had to plead with some of the internees to come out into freedom. By that time, many of the older and mentally less stable people in the camps, had become so alienated and scared of freedom that when they were to be compulsorily paraded before the Major, they turned and jumped out of the barrack windows, rather than face proceedings for their release. A sadly ironic end to a mission of undoing some 2500 "mistakes", a few score of which ended in sudden or slow death or in mental institutions.

'My own experience offers another illustration of the difficulties and embarrassment in readjusting oneself from long internment to freedom. I must confess that although I was joyful in looking forward to my release, it was tinged with a trace of nervousness when thinking of all the problems of free life I would have to cope with. Where should I begin?'

Similar questions were asked not only by 17 to 20 year olds—internees who had spent the best years of their young lives in internment behind barbed wire, but also by many older people with varied experiences prior to internment. For the *Dunera*-Hay-Tatura inmates it was not only a question of what to do after release from internment. It was also a question of how to adjust oneself to another country, another language, a different culture, and an unfamiliar way

of life. But, as already stated, time could also be a good doctor and life itself could be a good mentor. Robert Kahn, like so many other internees, found himself *as himself* in the new environment.

Leopold Kohn 'Together with many others of my age group, 16 to 18 years old, I left Vienna by "children's transport" for England in June 1939. It was my mother who applied for an apprenticeship for me and, having been successful in receiving an affirmative reply, I spent twelve months in England learning the trade of a baker and pastry-cook. As a matter of fact, I had the choice of learning other trades such as butcher, farmer or metal worker, but I chose to work in a bakery because it was situated in a small village in Suffolk. When several months later, I learned that I was one of 8 applicants for the position, I asked my employer why he chose me. He replied that he liked the looks of me, particularly, he said, because of the leather shorts I was wearing, as the photo of me, attached to mother's application, had shown.

'My employer was a baker, a pastrycook and also owned a cafe, and it was here that I was introduced to some typical English food. Remembering what my mother told me, I was trying to eat everything, I was given. But not knowing how it would affect me I put all the mustard I was given on one piece of meat and almost immediately I started coughing most terribly. To stop the cough, I put a large piece of butter into my mouth but could never remember how much time passed before I became "normal" again.

'On 12 May 1940, a policeman called at my place of work and requested me to follow him, saying that I should return two or three days later. I did return, as a tourist, 33 years later, in the year 1973, to have a look at the small village. I had not realized that I would be taken to Huyton Internment Camp, near Liverpool. Sleeping in garages and camps, whilst on the way there, was in itself an adventure. Others joined me on the way, and three of us had to share two blankets whilst we slept on plain concrete floors. When one of us had to go to the toilet, situated in the back yard, he was escorted by a soldier holding a rifle with a fixed bayonet.

'About a week or so later, we were aboard the *Dunera.* After the *Dunera* was a couple of days at sea, most of the inmates became seasick. It was terrible. One of the men continuously called out "Puddern" which in Viennese slang means sex.

'Having had experience in baking and cooking in England, I volunteered for kitchen duties, on the ship and at the internment camps at Hay and Tatura. There I worked for 20 months until I volunteered for the Employment Company. Most of the people

interned in the same camps, who did not do any physical or other work and did not even engage in sporting activities or some kind of studies, had serious problems with their physical and mental health.

'The internment was no fun, not even on weekends, when people came to visit us or to look at us through barbed wire fences, particularly at Tatura. Nevertheless, looking back at the four decades, I must confess to being grateful to be alive and in Australia . . .

Hans Hammerstein 'The Commandant in the second camp in Tatura (Major Fripps), was pedantic and dry, qualities that usually mix together. Whereas the Commandant in the Hay camp, his NCOs and most of the guards were good-natured and friendly, Major Fripps marched every morning into every hut, followed by ten soldiers, and whilst the hut-leader was reading the roll-call, all the inmates had to stand in front of their beds; on hearing his name, each man had to answer "Present", but later we were ordered to say "Here, Sir". When, at first, I did not stand to attention, the pedantic Major ordered me to do so. At the outset, the hut leader read: Dr Meyer, Professor Stein, Dr Frank, and so on. But the officer-in-charge then issued an order to omit titles and to read only the names. One of the internees fixed to his bed a notice which read: "A father is imprisoned here while his son is serving in the British army". The Commander saw it, looked at it sourly, and said to the internee: "Don't put that under my nose, I did not intern you."

'We were offered agricultural work on farms near the camp at Tatura. Naturally, we were happy to do it and I volunteered for the tasks to be performed. But when we were told that soldiers, armed with rifles, would escort us everywhere we had to do the work, some of us, myself included, withdrew. We stated again and again: we are not criminals; the British Parliament has acknowledged this fact; Australia needed workers and we had volunteered to do the work; why treat us like Nazi prisoners of war? Even after the Japanese entry into the war, when it seemed that our situation would be changed for the better, or at least reconsidered, the only result was the foundation of an "Australian Labour Corps" which we could join. And some of us did join it. It was straight from prison into the army—the only alternative, at that time, to get out of the dreaded internment camps.'

Kurt Fischer 'When Japan entered the war on the side of Nazi Germany and Italy, I was told that for the first time in its history, Australia was in danger of invasion. Rumours went around that, at last, we would be given an opportunity to be really active in the war

effort. The Camp Commandant arranged the installation of a loudspeaker in the big hall, thus enabling us to listen to news about the progress of the war and, at times, we could also listen to some concerts and opera. It was evident that we were no longer looked upon as enemy aliens.

'Meanwhile, the first transport of internees left for Eretz Israel and we were told that more transports would follow, subject to shipping being available. But we also knew that many ships were constantly leaving Australia with various produce, even live horses and other animals, for the Middle East, and therefore we were convinced that shipping accommodation, however little, would be available.

'At the same time, other possibilities to get out of camp became available to some of the internees. One was to get out "on parole" which meant to get out of camp and work anywhere until the end of the war and then to be shipped back to England. The second possibility was to work as agricultural labourers in nearby orchards. As a matter of fact, one of the largest orchardists near Shepparton . . . was Mr Moshe Feiglin, who requested the authorities to send him as many men as possible to his orchards, to work there all the year round. Another possibility was to join the Employment or Pioneer Corps. Several hundred men volunteered for the 8th Employment Company and some of them were given the opportunity to study at night and thus obtain matriculation certificates as well as tertiary institution degrees.

'At last, I was notified that I was included in the next transport to sail soon for Eretz Israel. It was even sooner than anyone of us expected. Only two weeks later, I was aboard the *Weipawa*, a refrigerated cargo ship, carrying meat for Allied troops in the Middle East.

'I shared a cabin with three other men, friends from the camp. Just as I was unpacking my things Major Julian Layton entered the cabin. He asked me if I was satisfied with arrangements. "Naturally", I replied in the affirmative. As I learned later, it was originally a luxury cabin for two persons only, but had been altered for the duration of the war to carry four passengers. It had an elegant wash basin, with taps of hot and cold water, something we had not seen since we left England.

'It was not long before the ship moved off. It sailed past harbour installations and after a while, we reached the high seas. The lunch bell rang and we assembled in the dining room, which was situated directly underneath the promenade deck. In addition to our group of ex-internees, the passengers included a few English non-commissioned officers, but they sat at separate tables. There was also a group of English officers and one minister with his wife and

children. An elderly, experienced steward served us, with the utmost courtesy. All the meals had many courses and we felt as if we were on a pleasure cruise. What a difference there was between sailing from Australia and the sailing to Australia on the *Dunera*. It was hard to believe that we were free men again.

'During the voyage, we were required to take part in several emergency drills. All passengers and crew had to don their life jackets and take up positions at the lifeboats to which they had been assigned. An officer would check whether the life jackets were on correctly and whether they were seaworthy.

'The daily news service of the BBC not only precluded boredom, but kept us in touch with the day-by-day progress of the war. After every session, all the passengers discussed the situation, each one expressing an opinion. We also had deck sports and all kinds of competitions. During the voyage I became friendly with one of the ship's officers. In answer to his questions, I told him about my life in Germany before Hitler came to power and what had happened afterwards. I also told him that I was a refugee from Nazi oppression, and was looking forward to making my home in Eretz Israel. I also related to him a few incidents in Buchenwald and other concentration camps. He then said to me that in previous centuries, Arabs and Indians used to treat their prisoners and slaves like that, but that it was difficult to believe such behaviour occurred in the twentieth century in a country like Germany.

'At last we arrived at Port Suez and soon entered the Suez Canal. We passed Ismailiah which was perching in the sun high above the other bank. The city's white houses with their flat roofs and the cupolas and minarets shimmering in the sunlight, made us feel close to our destination. On 31 August 1943, one of the most beautiful journeys of my life came to an end. I am indebted for that journey to the Jewish Agency and, above all, to Mr Benzion Patkin of Melbourne, who had done so much for us "down and out" refugees. I could best express my thanks for these efforts by integrating myself as quickly as possible into the life of Eretz Israel.'

Hans Hammerstein 'At about the beginning of 1942, our interests centred around two matters. One was emigration to Eretz Israel, the second was the advance of the Germans through North Africa in the direction of Eretz Israel. In an interview with Major Layton, I requested on behalf of over 100 other internees that facilities be made available for us to proceed to Eretz Israel to join there a Jewish Unit of the British Army. "There is no Jewish Unit and there will be none", declared Major Layton. "If you want to fight Hitler", he continued, "join the British Army without conditions. I am a Jew like yourself

and wear the British uniform." "I have been told that there are, or soon will be, Jewish fighting units", I answered. His reply was: "I came straight from the Minister and you will agree that I am better informed than you are". "In that case", I said, "we shall have to wait for another Minister!" "After that sort of speech, I must ask you to leave my office", declared the Major.

'It was not long after this interview with Major Layton that I learned about the existence of Jewish Units already serving in Egypt and other places in the Middle East. But, at the time of the interview what I heard from the Major was like a hammer blow. There were plenty of painful frustrations for us internees. I asked myself what would happen to us in the camps if we should still be there when the war ended. Whilst masses of Jewish people everywhere would be pressing the respective offices for immigration permits to Eretz Israel, who would remember the Zionists, interned far away? If I remained in Australia, I realized that I must understand the English language, the study of which I had never thought about before. The only foreign languages I learned at school were Latin and Greek. I had since learned Hebrew because of my decision to emigrate to Eretz Israel.

'At that moment I decided to start learning English which, I thought, should be useful anywhere. I had a good textbook and, as I feel now, made good use of it. I walked parallel to the wire fence all around the camp, reading the text book in a loud voice as many times as it was necessary to know it by heart. Thus I disturbed nobody whilst I benefited myself. Then I obtained an English reading book and a dictionary and although many jokes were made and told about me as a result of my endeavours, I could eventually read, write and converse in simple English. I confess I did all this for fear of not being able to emigrate to Eretz Israel, but am happy to say I was wrong.

'At about the same time, I received two letters, one from Benzion Patkin requesting an additional list of names of internees who I would recommend for emigration to Eretz Israel, and the second letter from *Hitakhduth Oley Germaniya* (Association of Immigrants from Germany) in Tel Aviv, with a similar request. Much later, I was told that Professor Norman Bentwich, who was considered the expert on International Law, stated that a holder of an Eretz Israel immigration certificate had to be regarded as one who could leave the British Empire and thus be released from internment. (Eretz Israel was not a part of the British Empire. It belonged to the League of Nations.) This statement by Norman Bentwich was contrary to an opinion expressed by him when he visited the Kitchener Camp, prior to our deportation to Australia. Rumours circulated that the above statement was also the result of Benzion Patkin's work. But he categorically denied it.

'However, the requested list had to be prepared and, together with a few old Zionist friends, the following guidelines were adopted: those who studied the Hebrew language; permanent or near permanent participants at our meetings, discussions, lectures, etc; contributors to KKL (Jewish National Fund) collections, and others fulfilling similar functions. We knew we had no infallible judgement but had to give the information, since the Zionist authorities "out there" knew much less than we did.

'When I arrived at the Kitchener Camp in June 1939 I enquired about the Zionists there as I wanted to join them. I knew that a substantial number of them had arrived in England from Germany and Austria and, although, there was a marked difference between them, in their psychological approach to the realization of the idea of Zionism, I nevertheless felt the ideal itself could possibly unite them and thus be persuaded to try to find a common form to solve their internal problems.

'The German Zionist organization, before allotting any of its members an Eretz Israel immigration certificate, first inspected with Prussian pedantry if he or she was a positively convinced Zionist and of real value for the upbuilding of the land and thus will not disappoint the special committee in England.

'The Austrian Zionist organisation, however, shocked by the Nazi invasion followed by cruel terror, had one thought in mind and that was to enable, by all means, as many persecuted Jews as possible to leave the country. Thus, whoever applied to them, was recommended for a permit to enter England which, at that time, served as a transit place for refugees from Nazi occupied Europe. Most of these men were not interested in Zionism, much less in the Hebrew language and culture. All their efforts, after arrival in England, were directed towards obtaining immigration permits to Eretz Israel or anywhere else.

'Sometime later, I learned of people who used their permits to immigrate into Eretz Israel only to use the latter as a springboard for emigration to the United States. Some Orthodox-Religious internees succeeded in using the *Agudat Yisrael* (an extreme ultra-orthodox-religious group) influence to obtain immigration certificates for themselves. I received a cable asking my opinion about a certain list of names submitted by some orthodox-religious men. The list did not even contain my own name. Luckily for us, the final decisions were made "out there" and thus absolved us from inner and outer conflicts.

'Yet, whilst our thoughts were absorbed with the expected early release for departure to Eretz Israel, our happiness was marred by the news of German advances in North Africa. The news of British and Allied retreats on the North African front, suddenly included names

like Tobruk, Solum, Derna, Sidi Barani, Mersa Matruh. These names, perhaps, were of little importance to the British Imperial strategy, but for us, they meant possible destruction and extermination. It was Churchill who said that, if necessary, the struggle against Hitler would be carried on by the Empire beyond the seas. We hoped and prayed the Suez Canal would not be given up. Whilst the pessimists pointed out that, so far, no army had been able to withstand Hitler, the optimists insisted that the former were no real armies, adding: "Britain loses many battles except the last one".

'An unexpected surprise for all of us occurred, as a sequel to Nazi victories, while we were still in camps in Tatura. What in fact happened was that some of the "good Germans" who had insisted on being interned with us and not with the Nazis, now informed us that they had applied to the authorities for transfer to a Nazi camp. Even our Herr von Zitzewitz, whom we had elected as our "Deck leader" soon after we boarded the *Dunera*, was amongst them. "But don't you think", we asked him, "the Nazis will make you pay for your attitude to them, as previously displayed?" "Oh, not at all", he replied. "I have been in touch with them for some time past and they assured me, they will readily accept me even now." Generally speaking, the attitude and language of these men became more unfriendly as news spread about Nazi victories. Eventually, their attitude became even anti-Semitic. But as time went on and the Nazis were defeated at El Alamein, the Germans who had sought the transfer soon realized that they had backed the wrong horse.

'To our great sorrow, three of the internees who struggled to be included in the list for emigration to Eretz Israel cancelled their departures. But I was immensely pleased when our good friend Heinz Bock requested to be included in the list, to replace one of those who were afraid of the voyage. I immediately informed Benzion Patkin and was advised that Bock would be included in the next transport.

'We were lucky. Unfortunately, however, bad luck struck two transports returning to England. Many of the inmates were drowned. One of those was Max Schiff from Dusseldorf, whose story I shall tell now.

'It was around April 1939. In addition to being Headmaster of the Jewish school in Stettin, Germany, I was also the head of the "Palestina-Amt" (an office of the Zionist Movement engaged in obtaining and distributing immigration certificates to Eretz Israel). It meant, in fact, that I was responsible for *Aliyah*. But the urgently sought after and needed certificates were unavailable. One day Max Schiff, a friend of mine from the days in the Zionist Youth Movement and who, five months earlier, was together with me, dragged by the Nazis into a Concentration Camp, came to me for the purpose of

hearing my opinion about a specifically designed plan to escape from Germany.

'A certain German shipping firm was advertising Mediterranean cruises with visits to many ports, including Haifa and Tel-Aviv, where passengers would go sightseeing on conducted tours. Max Schiff proposed to utilize such a cruise and thus save his sick wife and parents-in-law who could leave Germany, go ashore in Haifa or Tel-Aviv, and not return to the ship. I expressed my doubts about the whole affair because I did not believe the shipping firm was correct in its statements, as it was usually impossible to get ashore anywhere in Eretz Israel without some kind of a visa.

'Nevertheless, the Max Schiff family decided to join the cruise. Unfortunately, however, Max's wife and her parents returned three weeks later and Max himself was back in Germany four weeks later. Like all the other passengers, the Schiff family were allowed ashore in all ports except Haifa and Tel Aviv. They saw the streets of Tel Aviv from a distance of about fifty metres but couldn't get on to them. In Athens they hired a taxi and told the driver to travel northwards, but a police car was soon chasing them and after some hours escorted them back to the ship. In Rotterdam, the last port before their return to Germany, Max Schiff, wearing only bathing togs, jumped from the ship and swam ashore. He begged the police not to return him to the Germans. But his pleadings were of no avail. "Our orders are strict", the Dutch police said, "we must take you back to the German police". Max was imprisoned in Wesel, about 100 kilometres from the Holland-German border. The German judge before whom he was brought said: "This man has done what we request any Jew to do. He made every effort to leave Germany and, therefore, we will not punish him". Max Schiff then returned to his wife in Stettin.

'It was in the Kitchener camp that I met Max Schiff again. Together we were taken to the Isle of Man, followed by the transportation to Australia. He never stopped worrying about his wife. He was convinced that the only way to help her would be for him to return to England and to become a soldier there. He volunteered and went aboard the ship which, tragically enough, was swallowed by the waves somewhere in the Atlantic ocean. Following the latest disaster, all the internees who volunteered for service in the army in Britain, had to sign a "willingness to travel", i.e. that he agreed to sail at his own risk and that in case of death, the British Government was free of all obligations to his heirs.

'One young internee, still a boy, signed such a declaration and, as the day of departure drew nearer, became more and more nervous. His fear and anxiety grew and on the last night, before leaving camp for embarkation, he decided to escape. Everyone in the camp knew

that in a certain spot the barbed-wire fence was broken. There was a hole through which the boy slipped without much difficulty, to find himself in the "inner circle", beyond which was the second wire fence. The latter formed the "outer circle", with a third fence around it through which escape was almost impossible. Just at that moment, the soldier guard on the watchtower called out: "What are you bloody idiot trying to do there?" "I really don't know myself. I am afraid, don't shoot", answered the boy. "Get back to your camp immediately. Away with you", called out the guard. "But I can't find the gap in the wire fence", screamed the boy. "Everybody knows where it is. Look, down there." And the boy returned.

'Next morning the Commandant said to the spokesman: "I don't know who did it, but tell him to come to me. I'll certainly not kill him." The boy presented himself to the Commandant and explained that he was afraid to travel by sea but was also afraid to request the cancellation of permit to return to England. "Do you believe we shall drag you to the ship by force?" the Commandant asked. "We would not do that, but now I must punish you. This is my order. You see the door over there, in the military camp? You will have to spend 24 hours in there. It will be boring. Take a book with you. It may help you to pass the time. If it becomes too hot inside, the soldiers will let you sit outside. I told the soldiers what to do." The boy did what the Commandant ordered him to do. He read the book when the soldiers did not speak to him and we winked and made signs to cheer him up.

'As more people were released for service in the Australian Army or for essential civilian work in factories, schools and the like, and increasing numbers of men were returning to England or emigrating to Eretz Israel, the numbers still in the camps shrank appreciably and, as a result, life became more intimate.

'The camp library offered books to every released man. Our group took all the Hebrew and Zionist literature, since none of those still left in camp would be interested in such books. I personally still keep some of them. Prior to our final departure, we held a special service in the Synagogue, followed by a farewell speech-sermon by the beloved and highly respected Rabbi Emil Frank. Commander Fripps, who was present at the service, also made a short speech, wishing us a safe journey and good luck in a new life, in a new country.

'After Bock's group left . . . we had a really pleasant surprise. It was hard to believe when we were told that at long last the group of internees to which I belonged was to be prepared for the journey to Eretz Israel . . . Benzion Patkin arranged for a tailor to come to us in the camp, to take our measurements for suits and other clothing and underwear, as well as to make notes about sizes for shoes and hats, as most of us had practically nothing. Although we did not know who

paid for all these niceties, whether the Jewish Welfare Society or the Zionist Federation, or anyone else, we were most thankful for everything. Like it was for previous groups who departed for Eretz Israel, so it was for our group; as I was told later, the wonderful Mr Maddison worked hard to have our passports ready on time. Our special thanks go to him.'

Apart from returning to England or in some cases the USA, *Aliyah* to Eretz Israel, or "parole" within Australia, the other major solution to the predicament of internment at Tatura was the Australian Army. The 8th Employment Company of the Australian Military Forces was established in 1942, and was made up of about 800 volunteer internees. Those who joined had decided to remain in Australia after the war ended. The officer in charge of this labouring company (which one member later called being 'a coolie in uniform'), Captain E. R. Broughton, was extremely sympathetic to the internees and became part of their lives. He even refused all transfers until the end of the war in order to remain their commander.

Document 'In Memoriam: Edward Renato Broughton' by Erwin Frenkel, *Australian Jewish News*, 13 May 1955.

'On Tuesday 10 May, the remains of the late Edward Renato Broughton were conveyed to their final resting place at Fawkner Cemetery. A brief prayer in Latin, an equally brief prayer and pater noster in English and without further comment by priest or press almost unceremoniously, an extraordinary man passed away.

'Some will remember him as Captain Broughton, MID, Commanding Officer of the 8th Australian Employment Company which was founded in 1942 by about 800 predominantly Jewish ex-internees.

'Here was a unit which was extraordinary in itself. Its rank and file had one and all fled Hitler's Europe only to be interned in England. Some of them had survived an attempt to ship them to Canada on the *Arandora Star* (this writer amongst them) which was torpedoed leaving 1200 people in the Irish Sea for good.

'Subsequently, some of the 800 survivors together with others were shipped to Australia on the *Dunera* on which they were robbed by the later court-martialled guards. (The British Government paid compensation.) In Australia they found themselves sitting between two chains on the floor. The British Government confessed its mistake. The Australian Government said they had never immigrated.

'Finally (after two years' incarceration) they were released and enlisted. The unit was thus remarkable for its historic background

but further than that the average educational background of its rank and file was high above that of most other regular units.

'To handle such a unit it took an extraordinary man and Captain Broughton certainly was that man. Keenly intelligent, well-read, endowed with a superb sense of humour, completely untainted by any racial prejudice (he was three-quarters Maori), deeply interested in human beings, he did not only gain immediate respect and obedience but also the love and affection of the unit.

'He enjoyed hugely being at the head of this unit, learned and meticulously respected Jewish custom, and was immensely proud of the splendid work it did, humbly unaware of the fact that it was only he who could have turned these people into willing manual labourers.

'He knew every member of the unit by name, knew their personal histories, helped many in the achievement of their non-military aims. For years after he had been retired from the Army . . . he kept in touch with the boys like a benevolent father, triumphed with the successful and suffered with the failures.

'He engaged in an incessant publicity war on behalf of the boys and fought hard to have our status changed, only to be booted out by the Army eventually.

'But to us he did one important thing. After being shoved around as flotsam and jetsam for years he managed by this attitude—despite the unideal circumstances of Army life—to make us feel like human beings again, he restored our faith in man as something more than 92 per cent water and a few chemicals.

'In Jewish traditional parlance he was a Ger-Zedek (a man who conscientiously converts to Judaism, knowing well the prejudice and persecution to which he possibly becomes liable by such an act). In English parlance he was a scholar and a gentleman.'

The members of the 8th Employment Company worked as labourers in Melbourne, Tocumwal (on the Murray River 80 kilometres north of Shepparton) and other places. They also became well-known for their theatrical performances of anti-Fascist reviews. One of these was *Sergeant Snow White*, written by Sergeant 'Doc' K. Sternberg and his assistant scriptwriter Private S. Hochberger, performed at the Union Theatre, Melbourne University in May 1943. Sternberg had been a film producer for Gaumont British before the war, and the choreographer and sole dancer in *Sergeant Snow White* was formerly a member of the Russian Ballet in London. Hochberger had been a theatrical critic and Balkan Correspondent for a Viennese newspaper before the war. Together with many musicians, actors, singers, and designers, including Bert Irving Meier (later Mayer), Erwin Fabian, and Max Bruch, they began their wartime theatrical

work at Hay Camp, where they produced reviews titled *A Review Without a Girl* and *Show Without a Name*.

Catherine Duncan described *Sergeant Snow White* as 'gay and tragic', expressing 'the personality of these young men driven from their own country and deprived of all they possess, who can yet laugh at their troubles'. Its chief significance, she wrote in her review, was that 'it is Melbourne's first taste of European wit blended with the Australian idiom . . . a pointer to the future'—if these young men were welcomed as permanent Australian artists.

The Employment Company, therefore, not only became one means of escape from internment camps, but enabled many ex-internees to gain their naturalization through war service, and to re-establish their pre-war careers in a new country. At the end of the war there was some criticism of the naturalisation of *Dunera* refugees, but official Australian sympathy for their position was reinforced by many who knew them at first hand and could defend their new status.

Describing occurrences in the internment camps and later in the Eighth Employment Company, Pinhas Braun tells of a young man born in Germany who, if not openly denying the fact that his parents were Jewish, took every opportunity to tell people that they never wanted to associate themselves with Jews. Even his grandparents claimed that Germany was their motherland and the fact that the Nazis have declared them to be Jews and made them wear the yellow Star of David on their garments, was nothing but an error which would be corrected later one day.

Pinhas Braun 'The young man's parents told their son to travel to England and remain there until the people of Germany came to their senses. Then they would get back everything that was taken away from them and he, the son, could return. Whenever he had the opportunity, he made fun of the Jews, whether Orthodox-Religious or Liberals or non-religious at all. He claimed the Jews to be superstitious, believing in devils, angels and the like as if they lived in the Middle Ages rather than the twentieth century.

'At times I, and others like me, had to argue most bitterly with a communist on our left and this young ignoramus on our right. One day, at a regular health parade, when the soldiers in the company had to stand in a line with pants and underpants down, the Army doctor walked slowly along the line, sharply looking at the bottom half of each soldier's body, when he suddenly called out to the young soldier described by me: "What is this? How in hell did you get your penis so inflamed? And the filth and dirt inside? You go to hospital right away, where you will be circumcised and be healthy and clean again!"

'The young soldier protested that he is in principal against circumcision. So are his parents because it is barbaric and superstitious and he claimed the right to refuse such an operation. The Army Doctor told him this is an irrevocable order and requested the sergeant to take the soldier to hospital immediately and tell the orderlies to prepare him for the required operation.

'On return to his duties in the Employment Company a couple of weeks later, the young soldier appeared to be a different man. He never sneered at Jewish customs or traditions. He became very quiet and friendly and the whole incident was practically forgotten, when someone told him: "You see, the Germans declared you and reminded you of being Jewish but the Australians made you a Jew."

'He never replied, looked at the questioner and slowly walked away.'

Document Letter from W. T. Tackaberry, Prahran Sub-Branch, RSL, Victoria, to *Mufti*, official organ of the Victorian RSL. (Reprinted in *Guardian*, 17 August 1945)

'Your article [in July *Mufti*] . . . gives an erroneous impression regarding "overseas" internees who arrived in Australia on the *Dunera* in September 1940.

'I was Commandant of the Tatura Internment Camp at that time and was charged with the close supervision of them until I retired from the Service at the end of February 1942, and I claim to know something about them.

'Your article is headed "Suspects from Britain Admitted to Naturalisation" and I would like to know when has it been the British custom to convict persons on suspicion? As a matter of fact they were mostly classified Refugee Aliens and not Enemy Aliens . . . All those released had been found by British Tribunals to be friendly to the Allied cause . . .

'Those who remained in Australia and who subsequently voluntarily joined the 8th Employment Company or who were released to industry, were awaiting shipping accommodation to return to England. Some of these have returned quite recently, and the remainder are, of course, still here.

'It is some of these last named who are seeking naturalization . . .

'I know all the ex-internees mentioned in our article and I am of the opinion that they would make good, useful, and loyal Australian citizens . . .'

By 1943 most of the *Dunera* group had been dispersed in a number of directions. In February 1943 just over 200 men remained in the camp, out of the original number of over 2000. For many of those

remaining, their continued internment was an expression of both disillusionment and a conscious defence of their honour. For others, it was a case of being rejected by the Australian Army for medical reasons. A group of those who remained continued to protest against their status in a series of memoranda written by their camp spokesman, the lawyer Hans Natanson. When a Victorian Supreme Court Judge, Charles Gavan Duffy, was sent to the Camp as the second 'official visitor', they took the opportunity to state their grievances. (The first 'official visitor' had been Sir Frederick Jordan, Chief Justice of NSW.) These grievances were also conveyed in writing to Major J. D. Layton, the Home Office Liaison Officer. One memo dealt with the decline in quality of food *vis-a-vis* the rations provided for their soldier-guards. It complained of a monotonous diet of cabbage, the lack of mixed salads, no fresh fruit at all when fresh fruit was rotting in orchards not far from the camp, and a disproportionate share of the vegetables (such as potatoes) which internees themselves grew in their gardens.

Another memo, already quoted, argued that after November 1942 the system of financial self-administration had been eroded by limitations upon payment for work done, by a new system of closely supervised individual bank accounts rather than a group banking system, and by the replacement of the internees' own canteen by a military canteen which cut the total income that internees wished to distribute to the aged and indigent amongst them. The administrative and educational institutions of the internees were no longer paid for, even though the teaching of English and preparation of students for Matriculation and University entrance continued. In short, this memo claimed that an unofficial change in administration was leading to 'severe pauperization' of the remaining internees.

Document 'Statement IV: Censorship' by Hans Natanson, Camp Spokesman, 7 February 1943 (extracts only)

'Letters which dealt with private affairs only were returned [lately] with the remark: "This letter does not serve any useful purpose", or "Your aunt will not be pleased about your letter". In our opinion the writer of a letter can be the only judge of whether his particular letter serves any useful purpose or not. Letters addressed to close relatives in the USA dealing with the writer's prospective immigration to that country and giving a detailed curriculum vitae for that purpose, were handed back with the remark: "You may forward this information after your release from here". By actions such as this the immigration of the sender may later on be unnecessarily delayed for many months.

'Even letters addressed to Major Layton . . . were stopped with this comment: "Major Layton is already doing everything possible for you; there is no need to write this letter". Here again, I think, it must

be left to the discretion of the writer, whether he wants to send this particular letter or not, especially if such a letter deals with his release in this country.

'Last, but not least, letters addressed to solicitors in London were held up and first forwarded for perusal to Major Layton, to act as "pre-censor". It is a fundamental principle in every democratic state that a prisoner's communications addressed to his advocate shall not be interfered with. This right is even conceded to a convicted criminal. Censorship should never be exercised in an arbitrary manner, but be considered as a severe restriction of the "freedom of information", justified only and in so far as the safety of the state demands it . . .

'Recently articles are cut out of the newspapers almost every day, whereas formerly such deletions occurred very seldom and, as we ascertained, usually affected reports about attempted escapes of Nazi prisoners. Furthermore, articles containing praise of the 8th Australian Employment Company in which our former co-internees serve, and of refugee doctors formerly interned here, are now deleted.'

The final memorandum in this series was titled 'Additional Memorandum Relating to Some Fundamental Aspects of Our Situation' (7 February 1943), and also addressed to the Official Visitor. After Mr Justice Duffy visited the camp Hans Natanson re-stated the memo and informed Major Layton of the communication with Duffy. This final statement best summarized the fundamental situation of those remaining in the camp at Tatura.

Document Letter from Hans Natanson, Camp Spokesman, to Major J. D. Layton, 14 February 1943, 8 pp. roneoed

'Those who were released to date were not given their freedom because they were more loyal than those who are staying behind, nor did the others remain interned, because they are less reliable. It may rather be said that those who are staying at the camp are mainly men whose aims do not fit into the release scheme for U.K. internees in this country, and who, by reason of their self-discipline and firmness are able to adhere to their true aims and to suffer the privations and annoyances of imprisonment, even if they were to last for a longer period.

'As to the imprisonment, it has taken on an ever harder and more unfriendly aspect, especially in the course of the last few months. To our great regret we were forced to place our grievances with regard to [this] position before the Official Visitor and to appeal for his help and protection. What amongst other matters we chiefly protested

against was that attitude of the military authorities which we meet with everywhere. This attitude emphasizes that we are obliged to prove our loyalty and gratitude by making sacrifices to the Common Cause in Australia, whilst, at the same time, it attempts to render us more pliable to their wishes, partly by financial and disciplinary measures, partly by again and again giving vent to the suspicion: "There must be some reason that the Home Office does not release you"—although internees are leaving the compound every month and others have been in possession of the authorization of their releases for many months or even years . . .

'We are advocating our cause with a frankness which has perhaps not been usual before. We believe not only to serve our own interests, but those of all parties, if we can call things by their true names.

'We are asked for proofs of our gratitude and loyalty. We are expected to volunteer for the Employment Company or for fruit picking. It is considered a matter of course that we bind ourselves to remain in Australia for the duration of the Pacific War and for perhaps even one year after, if we desire to be freed. We are further expected to work as prisoners under guard outside the compound for 2d. an hour. We are limited, as never before, in the disposal of our funds, the Commandant falling back on regulations which we do not consider applicable and which have never before been interpreted in that way, with the admitted intention of making indigent refugees earn their few weekly pennies by building roads. Moreover, we have been informed that, in the case of our not joining outside working parties in larger numbers, notes will be inserted in our records which will prevent our release by the Home Office. Thus, on the one hand, moral obligations are suggested to us; on the other hand, we are subjected to attempted coercion and indignities . . .

'A number of our men are determined not to work as prisoners, they refuse to work under guard, they refuse to work for 2*d.* an hour. *They are only too willing to proffer their services as free men, enjoying equal rights, but not as prisoners* . . .

'It is true: England received us as guests. But for the last two and a half years she has gravely violated the rules of hospitality towards us, indeed, has turned it into the very opposite. The fact that we are at present detailed in Australia does not exonerate the British Government from responsibility. England has prevented us from proceeding to the countries destined to be our new homelands, although many of us were in possession of immigration permits to those countries and are even today in a position to obtain them. For years she has separated us from our wives and children, tearing our families apart. She has prevented us from saving our wives, children and parents from Germany and the occupied countries, thus sharing

in the guilt for the fate of those who perished under Nazi persecution and are still perishing daily. (Our unhappy comrades are unfortunately again and again receiving these terrible news.) England has prevented us from saving our relatives by deporting us to Australia in a ship in which we were robbed of our belongings and maltreated, and by depriving us of our liberty for more than two and a half years. That is the deliverances of which the military authorities speak and for which we are supposed to be grateful.

'Thousands of refugees were able to emigrate from Germany after the outbreak of war and even during the past year, and have today reached the countries of their destination. We, however, who have entrusted ourselves to the hospitality of Britain, have been bitterly disappointed. *Wherever our fellow refugees have found a new home, where they enjoy civil rights, they have, of course, offered their services and their lives to those countries. Examples are the United States of America and Palestine.* By an irony of fate some of our friends and relatives who emigrated from Germany are today in Australia as members of the United States Army sent here for the protection of this country, enjoying full rights as American citizens. Is it not an unbearable affront to demand gratitude for keeping us here as prisoners and permitting us to vegetate?

'We have already recalled the fact that those of our men who are released here, have to enter into an undertaking to remain in Australia for the duration of the war and perhaps for twelve months after. On the other hand, they are neither granted the right of legal immigration nor that of citizenship . . . This country will take from us only, without giving anything in return. We cannot but consider this way of forcing guests by imprisonment to take upon themselves hard and even unbearable duties, without their being granted corresponding rights, incompatible with the tradition of British fairness . . .

'It is war time and the authorities have no doubt heavy cares weighing on them. For this reason we have left many things unsaid and have even excused those who have done us wrong. Now, however, more than two and a half years have passed and the authorities have had enough time to make good the wrong they have done to men as to whom no doubt exists that they are loyal to the Allied Cause.

'We are well aware that we have been brought to Australia as refugees contrary to an agreement between the United Kingdom and this country, providing only for transfer of Prisoners of War. However that may be, according to the duties of humanity we can expect that the attitude of the Australian authorities should change. This country has made use of hundreds of our men for the Armed

Forces, for fruit picking and for skilled work, *thus showing that they have long ago abandoned the status of mere keepers or guardians and showing further that they are fully aware that security reasons can generally no longer be applicable.* By this action they made it quite clear that they have taken upon themselves the responsibility for those men, and they must not forget that they have, at the same time, taken over certain obligations from HM Government in the United Kingdom, such as, for instance, the fulfilment of the promise of transmigration given before embarkation in England. *It is time that this country abandons the policy of mere utility towards us and realises that, from a moral point of view, only two principles can be applied in our case: the security of the Commonwealth and the rights of the human being.* We cannot any longer be silent in the face of an attitude which only sees its own advantage, which entirely forgets its human obligations and which, without being prepared to compensate us in any way, constantly demands gifts from men who have lost everything. Nor are we willing to tolerate insults when we refuse to allow such gifts to be extorted from us.

'It is not for us to make suggestions to the Commonwealth Government. Possible satisfactory solutions, however, might be the following:

'1 *Facilities to be granted to all those desirous of proceeding to other countries . . .*

'2 *An opportunity of release in Australia without obligation to remain in Australia until the end of the present war*, including the right to a free return passage to the United Kingdom. Facilities to be granted to unskilled men for training as skilled or semi-skilled workers in the already existing training centres. (We would recall that a considerable number of our men find themselves unable to volunteer for the Employment Company, as they would thereby endanger the lives of their relatives under German control . . .)

'3 *Legal immigration and naturalization facilities for all those wishing to remain in Australia.*

'It is respectfully suggested that a speedier and more efficient liquidation of the problem might perhaps be achieved by transferring the administration of the affairs of UK refugee internees from the Army to some civil authority.

'As we realize that you, Sir, as Home Office Liaison Officer, have to show a certain restraint in your representations to the Commonwealth Government, we have entrusted this matter in the first place to the Official Visitor, as he is the authority instituted in Australia for our protection. We are aware that our requests go beyond the sphere of the functions of the Official Visitor and have asked him to present them to the proper authorities. His Honour was

kind enough to agree to forward our communication to the Minister for the Army, in order that Mr Forde may place them before the Cabinet . . .

'The camp has in the meantime been reduced to so small a number of men that the release of the majority in accordance with their justified wishes would not present insurmountable difficulties.

'Whatever harsh things may have had to be said with regard to the British Government's treatment of us, we have by no means forgotten that they have tried to make good in their own country in a magnanimous way the injustice done to refugees, by enabling them:

'1 to live again as free men and serve the Common Cause without compulsion and without having to accept far-reaching obligations;

'2 to proceed to the countries destined to become their new homes.

'*We consider it a human duty that at least the same conditions shall prevail in Australia.*

'We would therefore ask you, Sir, in your capacity as representative of the Home Office in Australia, to fully support in this country our cause which, we believe, is the cause of humanity, of justice, and of fairness. We would further ask you to forward this our request to the Home Secretary in order that he may realize what has to be done now and without delay for the obliteration of the unpleasant fact of this camp.'

But the wrongful internment of one distinct group of Britain's wartime refugee aliens came to an end. Most of them joined the Australian Army, whether the best-known 8th Employment Company or other Employment Companies, the AIF, military intelligence, or the entertainment troupe. Others were released into civilian jobs 'on parole', and others worked in industry. Most eventually took the opportunity offered by the then Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, of Australian citizenship, and became absorbed in Australian society.

For me the most moving part of this stage of the *Dunera* story is the voyages of those internees who first obtained immigration certificates to Eretz Israel, and were found suitable transport to the Middle East.

Hans Hammerstein 'We elected Dr Urbach as spokesman for our voyage. He spoke good English and we were confident he would perform his duties most honourably. His first act was to request the orthodox-religious young men to cut off their *Peyot* (side locks) and dress normally in the Western style. Thus, Dr Urbach thought, it would be possible to avoid drawing attention to us as well as to eliminate any would-be annoyances when returning to the "real" world after a long period of seclusion, far away from it.

'A stormy protest broke out and Dr Urbach declared that unless his request was fulfilled, he would not accept the responsibility of being the group's spokesman. Fortunately, an orthodox-religious Rabbi, Dr Feuchtwanger, also a member of this departing group, succeeded in persuading the young men to acquiesce to Dr Urbach's request. "Everybody", said Rabbi Feuchtwanger, "will be able to live and conduct his way of life according to his own wishes, after we have arrived in our own land."

'The *Port Philip* was a freighter, smaller than the *Dunera* but, as we found out later, quite comfortable and cosy. The ship was equipped with modern guns and the sailors' morale was high. They declared themselves ready to fight a whole squadron of the Japanese Air Force! At the same time, a police officer informed us that so long as the ship remained within the three-mile limit from the shore, we were still considered as prisoners. Also, if, for some reason, the ship had to return to these shores, we should be interned again. At the same time, he also wished us a safe journey and a happy landing.

'But the ship could not leave its moorings because the chief gunner was missing. After a search of several hours, he was found in a nearby pub, completely drunk, and was dragged the way he was to the ship. Yet he insisted on descending the steep iron steps by himself and, as it was feared, he fell down headlong, and damaged his skull. Dr Kurt Epstein, who was our chief doctor in all the camps and on the *Dunera* and now acted as the doctor on *Port Philip,* gave the gunner first aid but shook his head most anxiously. Would he recover in time to be able to carry out his duties as a gunner? After a couple of days, the man was on his feet but with his head bandaged all around; and the first thing he did was to examine the guns. We were much impressed with him. England, we thought, cannot lose a war with sailors like him.

'During the few weeks of our journey, we continued our studies of Hebrew and managed to have interesting discussions on various topics. We never saw a Japanese ship and the journey was uneventful. Eventually, we entered the Red Sea, then the Suez Canal, and finally arrived at Port Said which had just been bombed. We could clearly see damaged buildings and ships. We were about to leave the *Port Philip* to proceed to Kantara by train, when we were told by the Egyptian officials that since we had no Egyptian visas, we were considered illegal pass-travellers and would be taken to an internment camp until our cases could be cleared and appropriate visas issued.

'We were terrified. The Egyptian authorities wanted us off the ship, to intern us, but the ship's captain categorically refused to let us off the ship under such conditions. The captain was then informed that his ship would not be allowed to proceed further so long as the "illegal

passengers" were still aboard. The captain replied that he was ready to remain with the ship in the same place until he was assured that his passengers would not be molested after they left the ship. The only other unpleasant distraction at that time was to watch Egyptian workers loading and unloading ships. Barefoot and naked, except for a few torn rags around their loins, they laboured under the supervision of a foreman who held a leather whip in his hand which, apparently, was his badge of office.

'Suddenly, we saw an elegantly dressed French-speaking gentleman come aboard our ship. He was Monsieur Levy from Alexandria, an official of the Jewish Agency who had heard about us and our plight and came to cheer us up. Mr Levy told us that all our papers, as required by the Egyptian authorities, were ready and that he would return the next day to take us to Kantara where we would board a train for Tel-Aviv and Haifa. Great was our joy until we realized that the next day was Friday and that if we left Kantara then, we would arrive in Tel-Aviv on *Shabbath*.

'The Orthodox-religious men flatly refused to travel on *Shabbath*. The efforts of Dr Urbach to persuade Rabbi Feuchtwanger to prevail on them to change their minds were fruitless. The Rabbi replied that the only cause which might justify the violation of travelling or working on *Shabbath* would be the rescue of human lives. Whereupon Dr Urbach pointed out the damaged buildings and ships in the harbour adding: "You know that such an attack can be repeated at any time and all of us may be hit. It is the lives of human beings we have to save." Rabbi Feuchtwanger was convinced by our argument, and succeeded also in convincing the other orthodox-religious men.

'Next day, on Friday, as we followed Monsieur Levy to the station, some Egyptians came near us, calling out, "Rommel, Rommel", and, at the same time, making signs as if cutting their throats. Kantara station and all around it was crowded with British soldiers. Dr Urbach was trying to find out about departures of trains and other information when suddenly one of the soldiers approached us and, with some hesitation, asked us in Hebrew, what, in fact, we were looking for. If we were dumbfounded, the soldier nearly fell off his feet when we told him we were *Olim* (immigrants) to Eretz Israel from internment camps in Australia. In answer to our questions about Jewish Units, the position on the fronts, and so on, the soldier replied that Jewish Units had existed for many months and that the tide of the war was at last turning in the Allies' favour.

'Finally, Dr Urbach found out about a train leaving soon for Eretz Israel and the Officer-in-Charge, having shown understanding and kindness, told him that although no civilians were permitted to travel on a military train, he would move the soldiers from the last rail-car

further on to enable us to occupy it. The soldiers, not very willingly, passed on to other parts of the train and we occupied the last car. The train moved off. It was no dream. But, not long after we left Kantara, the train stopped for some unknown reason. Time was moving on but we were standing in the desert and all we could see from the windows was sand and more sand.

'When one of the men opened one of the doors of our carriage, we were horrified to see that the train was not there. Our carriage was standing alone, in the middle of nowhere! A few hours later, we noticed the train moving backwards towards us. What actually happened was that at one of the stations, the station-master had noticed the absence of the red lights on the rear carriage. He notified the next station where the train was stopped and, after examination, the authorities found out that the last carriage, ours, was missing. It was, no doubt, unhooked by someone at the first stop after Kantara, maybe even by a soldier who was angry because of having been compelled to move to another crowded and less comfortable carriage.

'It was *Shabbath* when we arrived in Tel-Aviv, and Lomas asked a passing Jewish policeman for directions to the *Beth Olim* (Hostel for Immigrants). Hearing the policeman's answer, Lomas corrected his Hebrew. The policeman looked lost, if not stupefied, but he gave us the right directions. He probably thought we were "illegal" immigrants. The caretaker at the *Beth Olim* apparently thought likewise. It was three years since any new immigrants had come there. He opened the doors and the first things we saw were: dirt, cobwebs and rats. But news spread quickly in the Tel-Aviv of those days, as not many hours after our arrival, we were invited by many people, including the representatives of *Hitakhduth Oley Germaniya* (Association of Immigrants from Germany) who transferred us into their own hostel which was clean and civilized.

'At first, I was invited to work at the youth village Ben-Shemen, but after a few weeks there, during which I had the opportunity to acclimatize and get to know the country, I enlisted in the Jewish Army. I was demobilized in June 1946, seven years after leaving Germany.'

After demobilization from the Army, Hans Hammerstein changed his name to Israel Shiloni. He joined the Kibbutz Beth-Zerah, near the Sea of Galilee and there married the lovely Miriam. Two children, a boy Zvi and a girl Talma were born to the young couple. Whilst at the Kibbutz he was the chief librarian in the local large library, in addition to other work—whether agricultural or anything else—he had to do from time to time. He and Miriam left the Kibbutz in the early 1970s and settled in Nahariya, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, between Acre and the border with Lebanon.

The thoughts of Alfred Bruner ran in unison with the turning of the train wheels upon the rails. He thought of the miracles that happened at the time of the first Exodus from the first real Egypt. With him, Alfred thought, the first miracle occurred when together with 260 other children aged between five and sixteen, he left the "Austrian Egypt" for England, travelling via Germany and Holland. It was one of the last transports to escape the hell of the Nazi Pharaoh.

Alfred Bruner 'At one time or another, the Jews came out from an Egypt and it is unimportant where the "Egypt" is or was and what its real name is or was. The Egypt of the Pharaohs in the days of *Moshe Rabenu* became a symbol of slavery, of persecution, of prejudice and extermination. *Moshe Rabenu* wandered in this desert for forty years and the number of kilometres he covered in that time was less than the number of kilometres I travelled in less than four years. From "Austrian Egypt" to "freedom" in England, then to Australia, back to the original Egypt and finally Exodus from it, through the same old desert, and real freedom in Eretz Israel.'

'The wheels of the train rumbled on the narrow railway line on both sides of which stretched the desert, lit by the first of April stars. It was the same desert which the Israelites crossed thousands of years ago and on the same night on which Jews everywhere tell the story of the "Exodus from Egypt" . . . I gabbled excitedly to myself . . . "I am making history . . . I repeat history . . . *Moshe Rabenu* (Moses, our teacher) travelled through the desert on foot but I, Alfred Bruner, travel by train . . . Transport has improved over the centuries . . . What a curious thing should happen to me on this very night, the night of *Pesakh* (Passover) . . . the anniversary of Exodus from Egypt, from capitivity, from slavery . . ."

Alfred Bruner was intending to join a transport which the British Government made available for those internees who wished to return to England during the war. He applied for a passage but, being a minor, he had to obtain his father's permission for the dangerous sea voyage from Australia to England. He cabled his father in England and although his father cabled his permission for Alfred to take the journey, his father also urged him to wait for a letter which he had sent him.

Bruner was one of 40 internees who prepared themselves for the voyage to England, but only one day before they were to board the ship, Alfred received his father's letter. The father wrote that, considering the great danger in sea travelling he urged Alfred either to wait until the end of the war or to seek the possibility of immigration to Eretz Israel. Alfred was amazed at his father's suggestion, as he had

never considered Eretz Israel as his homeland, but he acted on his father's advice and, at the last moment, withdrew from the group which sailed on the scheduled day for England. This was the third miracle in the life of Alfred Bruner. The ship was sunk by a German submarine and the group of forty Jews, together with the crew and other passengers, was drowned. "God himself directed the thoughts and plans of my father".

Not long afterwards, the Zionist Federation in Melbourne succeeded in arranging a number of passages for a group of internees, Alfred Bruner amongst them, on a Free French ship *Ville D'Amiens,* which took on war materials and provisions destined for Australian troops in the Middle East. (Strangely enough, it was the same ship which brought Benzion Patkin from Eretz Israel to Australia in April 1929.)

Although the *Ville D'Amiens* was scheduled to pass through the Suez Canal on the way to Haifa, it anchored at Ismailiya, half way between the city of Suez and Port Said, the nearest point to the front lines. There the provisions and war materials destined for the Australian troops in the Middle East who were fighting in the Western Desert, had to be unloaded.

The Jewish group from the Australian internment camp was ordered off the *Ville D'Amiens* and was taken into a camp where tens of thousands of Italian prisoners-of-war were already interned. The British did not ask the Jews too many questions. They knew the Jews were refugees, interned in England, transported to Australia, permitted to emigrate to Eretz Israel but not yet completely freed. Therefore, the POW camp was the best place for them. It wasn't long before the Jews and the Italians, though they couldn't understand each other, became good friends. All they had in common was internment in the one British camp. The difference, however, was that the Italians had fought in a war to which many of them, no doubt, had objected; but the Jews were interned because their Jewish great grandfathers had migrated to Germany or Austria instead of to England, Holland or America.

The British authorities told the Jewish internees that their cases had to be investigated in England and in Australia and in the light of the results of the investigations, their immediate future would be decided. Otherwise, the British paid the Jews little attention. They were preoccupied with the battles raging at that time in the Western desert.

Alfred Bruner 'We were hoping and praying to be able to celebrate the *Festival of Pesakh* (Passover) and to have the *Seder-Shel-Pesakh* (the first night of Pesakh on which the story of the Exodus from

Egypt, from slavery to freedom is told), in Eretz Israel. Our thoughts went back thousands of years to the time when our ancestors got out of Egypt. We were hoping that the same miracle might happen to us. But days went by and nothing happened. As the 5 pm train left for Eretz Israel each day on time, we thought that maybe tomorrow we would be on it.

'We were so hopeful of celebrating *Pesakh* in Eretz Israel that we did not even make any preparations for the *Seder*, the first night of the Festival, to be held in the camp. The day, on the evening of which the *Seder* was to be held, started as all other days. The hours of the *Erev* (the eve of) *Pesakh* went by, and also the 5 o'clock train left without us. We had no alternative but to begin to improvize the *Seder-Shel-Pesakh*, here in camp, the best way we could. Suddenly, at about 7.30 in the evening, as we were ready to sit down at the table, a British officer rushed into our compound and called out to us: "Quickly, pack up your things and get on the trucks which are waiting for you outside".

'No sooner were we aboard the trucks, than they moved off at great speed along the road which ran parallel to the Suez Canal and the railway line from Ismailiya to Kantara and on through Gaza to Eretz Israel. After a little over an hour, the trucks caught up with the train which we boarded with such speed that we were out of breath. We were never told, nor did we inquire, what induced the British to act in the manner they did.

'Whilst the train was still on Egyptian soil, prior to crossing the Suez Canal, one member of the group lifted a stone from the soil of Egypt and holding it for all to see, even the shiny stars in the sky, said in a loud voice: "I vow to have this stone on my table at every *Seder-Shel-Pesakh* evening, as long as I live". We did not know whether to cry or to laugh, but we knew that the train was carrying us to Tel-Aviv. Yet, one of the group said jokingly: "Don't believe everything that happens, it is all a big bluff. Have you forgotten that today is the 1st of April?"

Not long after Alfred Bruner's arrival in Eretz Israel, he changed his name to Aaron Bar-Nir (Aaron was originally his Hebrew name and Bar-Nir means 'field of expression'). A few years later he settled in the Moshav (an agricultural small-holders' village) Kefar Mordekhay, near Gedera, founded in 1950 by pioneers from England. It was named after Mordekhay Eliash, Israel's first Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Not long after the Moshav was established, it was joined by a number of immigrants from other English-speaking countries, including Australia.

Alfred Bruner 'When I speak about these events and happenings now, after so many years they seem to be wonderful stories. But, at the same time, every day was an event of its own. World War II which ranged all over the world like a horrible tornado, was a nightmare in itself. Every night, when we went to sleep, we shuddered to think what "tomorrow" might bring. Our attitude to sailing for Eretz Israel and settling there was like the formation of a sweet dream, a trance that could have become a horrible affliction but, in fact, became a beautiful reality.'

CHAPTER 6

Involvement, Sequel, and Beyond

In the Introduction I wrote about the beginning of my involvement with the factual story narrated in this book. This last chapter conveys nearly all day to day developments in the action taken by me to obtain the release of the internees and, where possible, to arrange their immigration to Eretz Israel.

With this in view and having read as many letters as it was possible on the one night in March 1941, I drafted a cable to Moshe Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, the following morning. I acquainted him briefly with the position and general background of over 2000 internees in Australia. Many of the internees claimed to be holders of Eretz Israel immigration certificates, and their earnest desire was to emigrate there at the earliest opportunity. I asked him to authorize me, by cable, to act on behalf of the Jewish Agency in the matter, and to transfer the maximum number of immigration certificates possible.

Many writers of the letters introduced themselves as members or Executives of Zionist organizations as well as of *Keren Hayesod* and *Keren Kayemeth* in Frankfurt, Vienna, Hamburg, Breslau, Berlin and many other cities in Central Europe.

I wrote the cable in Hebrew, knowing that Professor M. Goldman, the chief wartime censor of cables and letters written in foreign languages, would do his utmost to transmit it as speedily as possible.

I knew the Jewish Agency had many immigration certificates valid for Eretz Israel which, if not used within the stipulated period of time, would automatically be cancelled. The reason was that no possibility existed for Jews to leave Nazi-occupied Europe. Nor was it possible to have *Aliyah* from anywhere else, due to wartime and many other conditions arising from it. I signed the cable as Honorary Secretary of the Zionist Federation, knowing that I would be occupying this position within 24 hours.

When I met Dr J. Leon Jona on the following day, he repeated to me what I already knew from Dr Shlomo Lowy. But I asked him to confirm the invitation by letter, which he did on the same day, 12 March 1941. It read as follows:

'My Dear Mr Patkin,
'I have pleasure in advising you that at a meeting of this Federation last evening it was unanimously resolved to invite you to accept the office of Honorary Secretary of this Federation.
'I sincerely trust that, despite the fact that you have many calls upon your time, you will see your way clear to accept this office, as men of your type are urgently needed to help the cause which is so close to our hearts.
'With kind regards,
'Yours sincerely,
'J. Leon Jona.'

On 13 March 1941, I replied, thanking Dr Jona and the Federation Executive for the honour bestowed upon me and assuring them that I would do my utmost to justify their confidence. But prior to this I had told Dr Jona that my acceptance of it was subject to his definite promise to give me a free hand to act in all matters connected with the well-being and subsequent release for emigration to Eretz Israel of the internees in the camps in Australia. Dr Jona replied: 'This I promise wholeheartedly.'

I then informed Dr Jona what I had learned about the internees and told him also about the cable I had already despatched to Moshe Shertok at the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, and my intention to contact Major Julian Layton to request facilities to visit the internees at the camp in Tatura. 'You would not have been Benzion Patkin if you hadn't done that. As promised, I will assist you as much as I can', said Dr Jona.

Next day I telephoned Major Julian Layton and I told him that I wished to discuss certain matters in connection with the internees. I also informed him that, as Honorary Secretary of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, I automatically represented the Jewish Agency in all points concerning migration of Jews to Eretz Israel, likewise the well-being of prospective immigrants. Major Layton appeared to be very co-operative and suggested that I meet him a few days later at the Victoria Barracks in St Kilda Road.

I did not insist that our meeting be held immediately because I wanted to show Major Layton the Jewish Agency's authorization of my appointment, the arrival of which might well be delayed. I also wrote two letters on the matter, one to Moshe Shertok, confirming the cable, and the other to Dr L. Lauterbach of the World Zionist Organization, describing the position of the internees and repeating the urgent request for Eretz Israel immigration certificates. In both letters I inserted excerpts from a number of letters received from

internees themselves which, I knew, would be the best support of my demands for help to the authorities in Jerusalem.

At the same time, I answered about thirty to forty letters, apologizing for not writing to them earlier, giving the true reason that until very recently I knew nothing about their presence in Australia, and assuring them that, in the position I was holding, I felt confident of being able to assist them in fulfilling their requests, whatever these may be: 'Considering that it is impossible in one day or even in one week, to answer the many hundreds of letters received from the internees, please inform them of my intended visit to the camp, when I hope to discuss their requests personally.'

I met Major Layton a few days later, as arranged, and requested permission to visit the internment camp to meet as many internees as possible, to discuss their personal problems and ascertain the number of internees who wished to migrate to Eretz Israel. The Major asked me about my credentials as representative of the Jewish Agency. I replied that a cable had been received to that effect, but I had not brought it with me. 'As Secretary of the Zionist Federation, I automatically became the official representative of the Jewish Agency, and so is the President of the Federation', I said, 'but if you wish to see the written confirmation, I will bring it to you when we meet next time.

'Moreover, many of the internees would like to go to Eretz Israel to join the Jewish units there and thus contribute actively to the war against Hitler. I must have personal interviews with as many internees as possible, to ascertain their backgrounds in order to report fully to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem.'

Major Layton did not reply immediately. I felt as if he was trying to restrain himself from saying something that might be regretted later. At the same time, I had the feeling that eventually he would co-operate and assist in what I wanted to do. At last, he asked me some questions which, if answered firmly and correctly, would mean that the plight of the internees would be eased to a great extent.

Major Layton: 'Why shouldn't the internees work here in Australia as auxiliaries and, when the time comes, join a labour contingent? Why should they be taken to Palestine, whilst shipping space, even if available, is restricted, and who knows when such space may actually be available?'

My answer: 'Many of the internees are tradesmen and scientists and can be more useful to the war effort in the Middle East than they can be cleaning lavatories and sweeping floors in Australia. Many young internees wish to join the army, which they can do only in Eretz Israel, definitely not in Australia. These internees have even more

right to fight Hitler than anyone else and their rights should be respected.'

'Do you expect that the Palestine Administration will issue permits for internees to enter the country?'

'The Jewish Agency will provide the necessary certificates.'

'What do you mean by amenities for the internees and where will you get them from?'

'Amenities for the internees, I understand to be books, scientific and general literature in various languages, text books and aids for studying the Hebrew language, newspapers from Eretz Israel, equipment for sporting activities, special foods for those who need and request them, and other similar items.'

'But, as Honorary Secretary to the Zionist Federation, you have to obtain authority from your executive before you can take any action?'

'I was given a free hand to take all steps necessary to alleviate the plight of the internees, whether these apply to amenities or to emigration to Eretz Israel.'

Major Layton asked the names of the executive members of the Zionist Federation and requested me to promise him not to discuss or report any of our conversations to meetings of the executive. If, however, I felt it essential to consult someone, I should consult the President only, at that time Dr J. Leon Jona. When he resigned the presidency and Mr Bernard Cowen took over the position, I consulted him. Likewise, after the Tenth Conference of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, when Alec Masel was elected President, he became my consultant.

Meanwhile, I continued my correspondence with the internees and established firm contacts with Mr Arthur Lourie of the Jewish Agency in the United States and Mr J. Linton of the Jewish Agency in London, seeking their assistance in anything which might help the internees. Although I felt certain of receiving the required authority, I feared that it might come too late for my actions to be successful. It was not only a question of permits or release from the camp to sail overseas. There was the problem of shipping and, as the war intensified, every inch of space on any seagoing vessel had to be utilized for army and other war supplies.

Also, the organization of the whole operation, to transport hundreds of civilians from Australia to the Middle East, was in itself a task which may only succeed by an unimaginable miracle. And, in addition, all the elements were against the project. Rabbi J. Danglow, the Jewish Chief Army Chaplain, Mr Walter Brand, the Secretary of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, Rabbi L. A. Falk of Sydney, another Army Chaplain and several other such *Baaley-Batim*

(leading citizens) were against releasing any internees for migration to Eretz Israel, even to serve in the armed forces there. They insisted that if the internees were to be released, they should do auxiliary work in the military camps, on the wharfs or railways or any other place where a shortage of labour existed.

Whilst I was waiting for Major Layton to advise me about our appointment, I decided to speak to Rabbi J. Danglow once again, to try to convince him that his attitude to the internees was not only wrong but in direct opposition to Judaism which stands for pursuing true justice. 'Already', I said to Rabbi Danglow, 'voices have been raised in the British Parliament against the deportation of over 2000 Jews and some non-Jews, calling the action unjustified, wrong and anti-British. How is it possible that a Jewish Rabbi should justify a wrongdoer and condemn what is right?'

'You should not interfere in this affair', Rabbi Danglow replied, 'the internees are classified as enemy aliens. We are at war and England has to be guarded against fifth columnists. How do you know that amongst the 2000 internees some are not German agents? Every Jew has to be loyal to England and the British Commonwealth, which is our home and salvation. Whilst I have sympathy for the unfortunate brethren, my opinion is that they should be given some work to do in camp, work on behalf of our war effort. And, whilst they are being provided with food, clothing and shelter, they should try to learn English. I visited them in camp and told them so myself.'

At this point I interrupted Rabbi Danglow and, without being apologetic about it, told him. 'I resent anyone, particularly a Jew, saying that we Jews have to be loyal to Great Britain. We are loyal to Great Britain, Australia and the Commonwealth. Notwithstanding the arguments we Zionists are having with regard to Eretz Israel, our leaders have declared openly and squarely that we consider ourselves full partners in the war against Nazi Germany and everything we have, in manpower, ability and all resources, is at the disposal of Britain. Moreover, I know that the internees are willing to serve in the army, to go into battle, to contribute and assist the war effort by right, and not as second-rate alien citizens. You and I, Rabbi, could have been together with them in the internment camp, if we or our parents had not left Europe earlier. Thank you for your consideration.' And with these words I left him.

Rabbi J. Danglow completely changed his attitude to the internees about a year later. As soon as any internee was released or was about to be released from internment, the Rabbi helped him to find suitable employment and living accommodation and did everything to make the ex-internee as comfortable as possible. This assistance was extended not only to Rabbi Dr E. Ehrentreu and other religious men,

but to any other ex-internee who happened to approach him directly or indirectly.

Such drastic changes in the approach by Rabbi J. Danglow to various events and happenings in the community were one of his remarkable characteristics. He never explained the reasons for the changes in his attitudes, neither do I know of anyone asking him for elucidations to same.

Also soon after their arrival at the Hay Camp, the internees were visited by a Sydney Rabbi and Mr Walter Brand, the General Secretary of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. The visit was apparently arranged by Major Julian Layton.

The internees, when told about the forthcoming visit, were jubilant. At last, they thought, their troubles would be over. If not freed immediately, at least, they would be helped and taken care of. The younger internees would join the army, the older internees—professionals and tradesmen included—would do whatever work they could with one united desire, to help defeat Hitler and his Nazis. But, great was their disappointment because, having been assembled in the open square of the camp, they had been addressed somewhat like this: 'We bring you greetings from the Jewish Community of Sydney . . . we realize your plight and misfortune . . . however, as enemy aliens, and to safeguard the security of England in its hour of peril, you were brought out to Australia, a friendly and democratic country. If you will behave in accordance with all regulations, begin to learn English, we shall be proud of you. You will be given some work to do and you will be provided with all the necessities . . . we brought for you some amenities and will send some more later . . .'

The 'amenities' consisted of a couple of dozen tooth brushes, a few *sidurim-makhsorim* (daily and special holy days prayer books), some chewing-gum, some special items for women (no women were in the camp), and a few other trifles.

However tender and sensitive the feelings of the internees were prior to the visit of the so-called representatives of the Jewish Community, the inner sufferings became, for many of them, unendurable. They felt as if they were not only in a physical desert, in which the camp was situated, but cut off completely from any human kindness and compassion. Having learned from the letters of many internees about the 'welcome' they received from Mr Brand and the Sydney Rabbi, I telephoned to Mr Max Freilich in Sydney and asked him to find out from Major Layton, from Mr W. Brand and from anyone else who could help, what steps could be taken in order to help the internees. I also wrote to him on 5 April 1941, pointing out a particular case of an internee Jakob Breuer whose certificate would

expire on 15 May 1941. Unless something positive could immediately be done in this particular case, Breuer would remain interned behind barbed wire for the duration of the war.

The 'Internees Affair' was discussed at length with Dr Bernhard Joseph, legal adviser to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, a member of its Executive and, after the establishment of the State of Israel, the Minister for Trade and Industry. Together with David Ben-Gurion and other Eretz Israel members of the Jewish Agency who attended the far-famed Biltmore Conference, Dr Joseph spent a few days in Sydney and Melbourne, whilst en route to Eretz Israel from the United States. Owing to the impossibility of travelling across the Atlantic, arrangements had been made for their return to Eretz Israel by way of Australia and the Far East.

The stronger ones amongst the internees did not lose heart altogether and they were right. A few weeks later they were visited by Mrs Ricki Cohen of the Wizo-Ivriah of Sydney, and she was able to give them courage and some tangible help. The internees began to feel that the world also has kindness and brotherly feeling.

As is usual in camps, the inmates after a while began to organize their lives the best way they could under the circumstances.

About the same time a number of events occurred which left their own marks on the whole episode of *Dunera*-Hay-Tatura and, naturally, on the internees themselves. The internees were transferred from Hay to Tatura. Meanwhile I had my second meeting with Major Julian Layton and received a cable from the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem appointing me their representative to deal with all matters connected with their well-being and subsequent emigration to Eretz Israel, and also to act as Liaison Officer between them and the camp authorities. The cable also informed that certificates would be available for anyone who wished to migrate to Eretz Israel.

The transfer of the internees from camps near Hay in New South Wales to camps near Tatura in Victoria was good news for all concerned. In their recollections, all the internees have expressed satisfaction at having come to Tatura. Many reasons were given. The climate, the possibility of obtaining work in orchards and other places near the camp, proximity to Jewish communities, also conditions in general were much better in the new camp.

At my second meeting with Major Layton, I showed him the cable from the Jewish Agency and informed him that I had already made some necessary preliminaries with regard to the departure for Eretz Israel of at least 25 men. I also asked him how soon I would be able to visit the internees, discuss the matter with them, and see for myself the people and their immediate needs. Major Layton listened to me most patiently and when he thought I had finished my introductory

remarks and requests, asked: 'You said to me at our first meeting some weeks ago that you had then already received the cable about your appointment. But, according to the date on it, it seems as if you received it the day before yesterday. Can you explain this?' My reply was simple, 'If you remember, Major Layton, I stated that I would bring you a confirmation of what I had already been advised, and so I did.'

After we had finalized the date of my visit to the Tatura camp, I told Major Layton that I should be travelling in the car of a friend, Bill Newton, who luckily had a gas producer and could travel longer distances without petrol (which was almost unobtainable, except for 2-3 gallons a month allowed by the Government on special ration coupons). I also mentioned the name of Yoseph Ginsburg, a good friend and an active worker in various Jewish communal and Zionist institutions. Having received the Major's approval to my requests, I was asked by the latter to wait two or three days before travelling to Tatura, to enable the Camp Commandant to advise him the date and day most suitable for this first visit.

When at last everything was ready for the visit, I ordered substantial quantities of special foods to be taken to the internees—*Lekekh* (honey cake), various kinds of specific Jewish biscuits, Jewish Kasher sausages (with and without garlic), assorted confectionery and other things which, I thought, might brighten their day. Because I had promised Major Layton not to talk to anyone except Bill Newton, Yoseph Ginsburg, Alec Masel and Bernard Cowen of the Zionist Federation Executive, about the visit to the internees at Tatura, I could not apply for any funds to cover the purchases and other expenses. Hence it was my personal privilege to pay for everything.

On arrival at the camp, I first called on the Camp Commandant to whom I explained my responsibilities *vis-a-vis* the internees and the functions I had to perform to enable me to carry them out. The Commandant was most sympathetic and promised to do everything in his power to co-operate with me to the maximum. When I told the Commandant that I wished to speak to as many internees as possible, he remarked that all such conversations had to be conducted in English and in the presence of a guard. I agreed, but suggested that first I should address as many as possible as a group, no matter how large the number of internees who should want to listen to me. This could be followed, if required, by personal conversations. I also told the Commandant that in order to make myself understood, I would have to speak in English, Hebrew and Yiddish, the latter being somewhat similar to German. But as I do not speak the true German language, I assured the Commandant that nothing would be said by me which could be construed as subversive or anything like it.

The Commandant agreed and ordered the internees to be assembled in some open place nearby (although it was winter, the weather was beautiful), for me to address them. Whilst the guards were assembling the internees, I asked the Commandant's permission to hand over the things I had brought with me for them. These included newspapers, periodicals and books—some of which were recently received from overseas while others, text books for the study of the Hebrew language in particular, had been obtained locally. The Commandant acquiesced to the latter request and invited the three of us to have lunch with him after I had met and spoken to the internees.

At last, I was led out of the front door, and saw about 200 to 300 men silently looking straight at me.

One man in particular attracted my attention. He had a yellow beard, curly and dishevelled, and thick hair. He was wearing an old army greatcoat, the collar of which was fastened with a safety pin. His eyes were looking straight at me trying to pierce, it seemed to me, my own thoughts, and for a brief while I could not take my eyes from him. It was as if I were hypnotized.

The first silent introduction did not take longer than a minute or so. I asked the guard nearby to get me a chair so I could stand on it and see the men's faces whilst I spoke to them. I began my talk with the usual greeting *Shalom Aleikhem* (may peace be upon all of you), and then continued: 'I bring you greetings from the Zionist Movement in Australia and from its Jewish community. I apologize most humbly for unkind attitudes by some visiting individuals as displayed towards you from time to time, and which could have been ascribed as coming from the community as a whole. This is definitely not the case. We all belong to the same Jewish people and it was only by accident that you are inside the barbed-wire fences and we are outside. It could definitely have been the other way around.

'We have been informed that opportunities will soon be provided for some of you to return to England and for others to perform certain works connected with the war effort in Australia. But I also wish to advise you that endeavours are being made to acquire shipping accommodation for anyone who wishes to emigrate to Eretz Israel. Immigration certificates will be made available, beginning with those men who had such documents prior to internment in England but lost them for various reasons.'

Naturally, I added, release from internment to proceed to Eretz Israel, was a necessary pre-condition for obtaining a certificate.

As I spoke, I could sense a feeling of excitement in the listeners. The faces were now smiling; many were nudging each other with their elbows and I also noticed some of them making movements as if wiping tears from their eyes. I publicly expressed my thanks to Major

Layton and the Camp Commandant for making this visit possible. I also informed the internees about the books, newspapers and periodicals which I had brought with me and would leave, together with the food. Any articles, whether books, clothing or anything else they needed, would be supplied almost immediately, provided they could be obtained. Also, I added, large quantities of books in Hebrew, German and English, also some in Yiddish, were on the way to Australia from the USA and Eretz Israel and should arrive any day now.

I then invited questions. The first was, how soon did I think the first group of internees could leave for Eretz Israel. The second question was whether it would be possible to obtain clothing, as most of them had hardly anything to wear. Another question was about Kasher food on the ship for the orthodox-religious men. One of the internees asked about passports or what kind of personal identity documents would be provided to those men who had lost their original personal records. There were many similar questions. I assured the questioners that everything necessary would be done for them to return to normal civilian life. It was true, I said, that they had already been behind barbed wire for a long time, but a little more patience would help us to help them.

I then asked for a representative or spokesman to speak to me privately. The man with the yellow beard and the yellow dishevelled hair lifted his right hand and called out that he wished to speak to me. His name, he said, was Hans Hammerstein and he was the representative of the Zionist group. I invited him to come into the nearby hut as was indicated to me by the Camp Commandant, but prior to departing, I wished all the men a hearty *Shalom* and *Lehitraoth Bekarov* (to meet again very soon).

Although it was our first meeting, I felt as if we had known each other for a long time. Notwithstanding the fact that a sergeant was present, sitting at the same table with us, I do not recall him making any derogatory remark when our conversation automatically passed over from English to Hebrew. Only when another officer was about to enter the hut, did the sergeant say that we must converse in English only. I told Hammerstein about my intention to visit the camp as often as possible, and I requested him to advise, as early as possible, the approximate number of prospective migrants to Eretz Israel, together with whatever particulars he could obtain about their backgrounds, their association with the Zionist Movement, their knowledge of Hebrew, their marital status and, if married, whether the families were still in Germany or anywhere else. I also suggested that all correspondence regarding migration to Eretz Israel should be conducted, if possible, through him instead of with every prospective

migrant individually, unless any individual internee specifically requested to correspond himself on the matter.

Hammerstein agreed to my suggestions and promised to fulfil his duties faithfully and to the best of his ability. He was of great help to me. Our correspondence led, not only to success in our endeavours with regard to migration to Eretz Israel of about 150 men, but also to a personal friendship which strengthened still further as time progressed. If not for the interference of Walter Brand and other officials and representatives of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society and some chaplains, not less than about 800 men would have migrated to Eretz Israel in those years.

It was not long before I received advice from Major Julian Layton about the possibility for 13 men to sail to Eretz Israel within one to two weeks. The news was immediately transmitted to Hans Hammerstein and within a couple of days the names of the 13 internees reached me through Major Layton. I had to prepare the passports and clothing, and arrange whatever special Kasher food any orthodox-religious men in the group required, and other amenities.

As it happened, the ship was to sail a few days earlier than originally expected. I went to the Passport Office and spoke to Mr Lionel Maddison, the officer in charge, about the urgency to prepare travel documents for the men. I apologized for speaking emotionally on the matter and explained the reason for it. Mr Maddison said he fully understood the situation but requested more information, in addition to names, ages, places of birth and other relevant data.

Again I had to contact Major Layton to convey the request. I suggested that he should transmit the required information direct, thus saving precious time. Later I found out that Mr Maddison worked Friday evening and all day Saturday and Sunday in order to have all the documents ready. He had a junior secretary to help him. When I offered my own assistance, his reply was: 'Mr Patkin, you have so many other things to do, please let me have the privilege to do at least the passports for this group and for as many other groups which will follow the first one.'

I then proceeded to one of the largest men's clothing factories to arrange for the supply of one suit for each man in the departing group. But the owner of the factory (whom I considered a personal friend and a highly respected member of the Jewish community) flatly refused to do anything because he was preoccupied with military as well as civilian orders. At first I thought that the refusal was made in a form of a joke, to tease me. But when I realized that the gentleman in question was serious, I tried to explain that to help internees to sail to freedom to Eretz Israel was part of the war effort.

But he was adamant and I had a feeling he wanted me to leave. So I left this factory and went to another, the owner of which had always been friendly to any good cause as well as to me personally. But it was the same all over again and he even told me I was wasting my time on an undeserving business. But I did not give up. I went to a third factory where I could talk to the owner in Yiddish, yet he was less co-operative and more unfriendly than the other two. I asked him to explain to me the reason for such an attitude and the answer was he had no time for *Pusteh Reyd* (empty words).

I was angry, frustrated and at a loss to know what to do. 'Never give up if you are right', was my motto at all times. I decided to attack the objective from a different angle. In addition to the suits, it was also necessary to obtain underwear, socks, shirts, shoes and other articles. So I went to Mr Percy Goode, manager of the men's sports and casual clothing department at the Myer Emporium and told him in short the story about the *Dunera*-Hay-Tatura episode. I also told him about the prospective release of some hundreds of internees to enable them to emigrate to Eretz Israel, and of the necessity of providing each man with clothing and other personal articles. I also told him of the unfortunate experiences I had with the owners of the three factories.

Mr Goode asked me: 'Why didn't you come to me in the first place as I would have arranged everything for you without any trouble. As a matter of fact, I shall discuss the project with one or two of our Directors and arrange the prices to be even lower than what you would have had to pay if you bought everything direct from the factories.' Mr Goode made immediate arrangements for a tailor from the Myer Emporium Workshop to proceed with me to the Tatura Camp to take every man's measurements for all kinds of clothing so these articles would be ready within the next few days.

I telephoned Major Layton requesting him to make arrangements for the tailor and myself to visit Tatura camp on the following day and then I arranged for Mr Scott (owner of taxis) to drive us there and back in one of his cabs. Everything worked excellently. The men received their articles exactly six days later, at Broadmeadows Military Camp, whilst waiting for a signal to proceed to Port Melbourne to board the ship. I had visited them every day and each time brought with me one other friend to meet the men and also give them some extra articles of food to take aboard the ship. On the day before their departure, I was presented with a beautiful chess set in a wooden box and on the back of the cover was the following inscription: 'With our sincerest thanks from your Zionist friends—Tatura, Vic. on the way to Eretz Israel, per, Leonhard Levin 20.III.1942.'

In its issue of August 1942, the journal *Ivriah* published a letter signed by Leonhard Levin, on behalf of the group and mailed in Bombay on 18 May, expressing thanks to all those who had helped them to become free men again and enabled them to migrate to Eretz Israel. In the same letter, they gave their impressions on meeting various organizations in Bombay, particularly the Jewish Relief Committee and the many young individuals they met in the Jewish Club.

The groups of internees which followed consisted of about 20 to 37 men each, who departed to Eretz Israel at intervals of two to three months. One of these, consisting of about 25 men, experienced an unfortunate ordeal. Since the movements of ships, their cargoes, the crews and the carrying of civilian passengers were strictly controlled by the military authorities, advice as to the number of places available for released internees was given to Major Julian Layton, who in turn passed the information to me and to the Camp Commandant.

On this occasion, we were advised of the availability of 25 bunks or space for 25 men. All arrangements were made accordingly—selection of the men and organization, their passports, clothing and other necessary amenities. But after the 25 men were brought to Broadmeadows Camp to await the signal to board the ship, advice was received that room for only 23 men was available. Therefore, according to Major Layton's instructions, two men had to be returned to the camp. The men arrived at Broadmeadows on a Friday afternoon. But instructions for two men to return to camp were received on Saturday morning.

Together with my wife Hemda and Zipporah and Mordekhay Navon, I arrived at Broadmeadows early on Saturday afternoon and found the 25 men spiritless and depressed. Some of them had tears in their eyes. They told me what happened. It was an error by the shipping authorities. They suggested that I should decide which two men were to return to Tatura to await the next transport. Naturally I refused to perform the 'honourable act of duty' and suggested that the men should ask for volunteers, or draw lots. By an overwhelming majority, the men decided on drawing lots. The 25 names were written out on pieces of paper, which were then put in a hat and Hemda and Zipporah Navon each drew one name.

The two men accepted the decision and, on the following Monday, they were returned to Tatura accompanied by two soldiers, both armed with rifles. The soldiers apparently liked to have a glass of beer now and again. So, prior to boarding the train at Broadmeadows and until they left the train at Tatura station, they each had a number of drinks and added a couple of extra glasses 'for the road', at a Tatura pub itself. They were too full to walk to the camp without external

help, so the two internees took a rifle each in one hand and, supporting a soldier with the other, walked slowly at the side of the road and arrived at the camp late in the evening, when most of the inhabitants were already asleep. The camp guards at the gate were most sympathetic to the soldiers and the two internees. They carried the former to their quarters and told the internees to proceed to their hut and thus the matter ended.

There was an interesting experience with another group just prior to boarding the ship which was moored at one of the berths at Port Melbourne. As usual, the group of released internees was taken from Tatura to Broadmeadows. It consisted of 28 or 30 men, half of whom were orthodox-religious and half were secular. The conditions for transporting the released internees to Port Said, from where they would proceed by train to Eretz Israel, was that they should take responsibility for looking after the horses which the ship also carried. Two of the lower decks were specially arranged to carry the animals which had to be fed and watered and, in addition, the stables were to be cleaned frequently. The orthodox-religious men agreed to do the work during the six days of the week, from Sunday to about mid-day on Friday, but not on Saturdays. So the secular men said they would work on Saturdays and rest on Sundays. Everybody was happy and it seemed there were no problems.

On a number of occasions, whenever it was possible, I inspected the quarters on the ship allocated to the ex-internees. I also spoke to the captain and stewards, explaining to them the actual reasons for the men's internment and their sailing for the Middle East. Never did I encounter any hostility or lack of co-operation from any of the ships' authorities. Whenever I requested some special refrigeration space for as much as 300 or 400 kilograms of Kasher meat, sausages and other foods which were supplied from Melbourne or Sydney, it was provided. Moreover, the ships' authorities gave permission for the orthodox-religious men themselves to clean the refrigerator and to supervise or to wash all the dishes and utensils.

At the appointed time, military trucks transported the men from Broadmeadows to Port Melbourne. On one occasion the officer-in-charge of the guards escorting the group, noticing a number of the men having long side locks (*Peyoth*), requested the men to push them under their hats and avoid any unnecessary questions by the wharf labourers, soldiers and others. As usual, the military trucks carrying the ex-internees, were covered with canvas and no one knew or asked what was inside. When the trucks arrived at the wharf, the canvas was lifted and as the men began to emerge, a sudden strong wind blew off the hats and as the men standing nearby saw the side locks and the

beards swaying and swinging, exlaimed: 'Blimey! Who the hell are these?'

One of the outstanding incidents in the eventful story of departures of the ex-internees from internment in Australia to freedom in Eretz Israel, occurred when a large group of 37 men boarded the ship in Sydney instead of Melbourne. At first the men travelled by Victorian train to Albury where they changed into the New South Wales train. From Albury they travelled to Liverpool, about 30 kilometres south of Sydney, where they were housed in a military camp, to wait for a signal to board the ship which at the time was loading produce for the Middle East. Therefore, all the clothing and other amenities had been taken to the men prior to their leaving the camp at Tatura. It was most remarkable. Thanks to the goodwill and cooperation of Percy Goode and his co-workers, every article delivered to all the men who departed for Eretz Israel was perfect in every way.

Also, as was usual, Major Layton obtained for me the permits and rail tickets to enable me to travel to Liverpool to see the men off. Luckily, I managed to be on the same train from Albury to Sydney as the ex-internees were. But my request to travel in the same rail car was flatly refused. The officer-in-charge of the soldiers' escort told me: 'So long as these men are on Australian soil, they are considered enemy aliens and as such all close contact with them is strictly forbidden. But, he added, with a wink in his eye, 'you can try and talk to them through the windows. I'll tell the guards not to interfere'. Thus, I was able to exchange some sentences with some of the men and speak at length to others, I also could see them wiping tears from their eyes.

Having been told that the two cars in which the men were travelling would have been detached from the train at Liverpool station, soon after arrival in Sydney I hired a taxi to proceed to the Liverpool Camp. I did not realize how difficult it would be to find a taxi to drive me that distance. Because of petrol rationing, every taxi-owner preferred short trips to long ones which carried a so-called penalty rate. At the camp in Liverpool I was met by the Commandant who told me he had received advice about my arrival from Major Layton and assured me everything necessary would be done to make the men's departure as comfortable and as pleasant as possible. The Commandant suggested I should see the men after lunch, adding: 'Please be my guest for lunch. You will meet some friends of yours.'

The 'friends' I met were Mr Walter Brand, Rabbi L. A. Falk and another man whose name I don't remember. Almost simultaneously, Rabbi Falk and Mr Brand, without even a usual greeting called out: 'What did you come here for?' and then 'You should not have come and your presence is not required'. My answer was short and to the point: 'I came in the course of fulfilling an act of duty, as well as to

derive the satisfaction of seeing 37 fine Jewish men going from bondage to liberation'. We had a good lunch, following which an officer led me to the ex-internees where I remained for about an hour, during which time I gave them names and addresses of my own and Hemda's families in Eretz Israel, for them to pass on personal greetings from us. The men were glad to have such introductions to people who had lived in Eretz Israel for many years past and might be able to help the newcomers with easier and speedier acclimatization in a new environment. After I had ascertained that everything was right with the group's sailing, I returned to Sydney. Two days later, after I was advised that the ship had sailed for the Middle East with all the 37 men aboard, I returned to Melbourne.

Unfortunately, however, one of the men who intended to write his personal reminiscences about the period of 1933-45, died before he could do it. I knew he started writing them whilst still at Tatura, and continued them aboard ship whilst *en route* to Eretz Israel and later, when he lived for a short time in West Germany.

This man was Dr Hermann Maschke. Until the Nazis came to power, he was a highly respected judge in Hamburg. In addition, he was most active in many fields of public endeavour in the general community as well as a devoted Zionist activist. One of the many public positions he held within the Jewish community was the Presidency of the *Keren Hayesod* (Jewish Foundation Fund) in Hamburg and surrounding districts.

Dr Maschke loved music and understood it well. He was a good organist and violinist but, as he wrote in one of his letters, he could not play the violin because he did not have one. I read the letter to Miss Margot Sheridan, a very well-known musician in Melbourne, particularly through her solo performances and as an accompanist on the radio and special stage presentations. Two days later, Miss Sheridan brought a beautiful violin to be transmitted to Maschke. Three days later the violin was in Maschke's hands. I cannot, unfortunately, reproduce here the letter of thanks received by Margot Sheridan. It was one of the most moving descriptions of life of an internee and the satisfaction he derived when playing the violin, knowing that it was sent by a wonderful and kind person, although he never met her.

In the years 1942-3, Australia was visited by Dr Michael Traub, who came here to conduct fund-raising campaigns on behalf of the *Keren Hayesod* and as a representative of the Jewish Agency. When he saw some of my letters to internees at Tatura camps, he exclaimed: 'This Dr Hermann Maschke is a personal friend of mine. We were together on some executives when I lived in Germany. He was one of

the leading figures in the German Zionist Movement as well as in the German-Jewish community. Why is he interned?'

I showed Dr Traub all the correspondence and documents in connection with the whole *Dunera*-Hay-Tatura episode and, after reading through a number of letters and newspaper articles, he declared that he still could not understand the whole business. I suggested to Dr Traub that he come with me to Tatura on my next visit, a few days later, and he thankfully accepted the invitation.

Maschke was as much surprised to see Dr Traub as the latter to learn about his friend's internment. They spent a whole hour talking but the parting was rather sad. Although they expressed the hope to meet soon in Eretz Israel, their meeting did not eventuate due to the sudden death of Dr Traub whilst campaigning for the *Keren Hayesod* in the United States. But when we returned to Melbourne, Dr Traub gave me a small parcel, saying: 'Herman Maschke requested me to give you this token signifying the everlasting friendship which he and all other men in the camp feel towards you. What you have done for them and the way you have done it, cannot be measured otherwise except by friendship and goodwill.'

When I opened the parcel I found a chess set, the figures of which were made in the forms of 'Australiana'. The Kings and Queens were Aboriginal men and women, pawns were made as Sheep, the Castles, Knights and Bishops in the forms of Koalas, Kangaroos and Emus respectively. The material used for the set was bits and pieces of three-ply wood and empty cotton thread spools. I was speechless. Why should I get presents from men who were interned for no fault of theirs? I should give them presents, and so should everyone else who was on this side of the barbed-wire fence.

When Hermann Maschke arrived in Eretz Israel, he wanted to get a job connected with afforestation. He did not succeed and never tried to use any connections to obtain benefits. He hated bureaucracy and special recommendations and spent the last days of his life with his elder sister, one of the few survivors of a large family which perished in the gas chambers.

About nine years later, on my first visit to the land of the State of Israel, after an absence of over 23 years, I met Heinz Bock again, this time in Jerusalem. 'For the first time in my life', he said, 'whilst I was still in the train, between Port Said and Eretz Israel, I had the feeling of being a free man. Not only because I was not interned any more, but because I felt as a Jew, and I looked forward to living and working as a free Jew, amongst free Jews in a Jewish land. I was told that life in Eretz Israel was hard. Our Zionist friends who left the camp in Australia before us wrote to tell us that it would not be

easy, climatically, economically, or, what was not less important politically.

'Because I knew all this, I came to Eretz Israel as a happy man. I can say with a clear conscience that I was not disappointed for a moment. After 2000 years of trials and errors, I had come home to my land, the land of my Fathers. And, it was not a coincidence that from the beginning I lived in Jerusalem—the old, yet new, capital of our country. I love this wonderful city more than any other, anywhere in the world. At the same time, I shall never forget all my dear ones and the six million of my brothers and sisters who so tragically lost their lives. But I am comforted by the thought that after all the sufferings of my people, I was able to find my way into our only homeland.'

When those internees who for some reason could not return to England, migrate to Eretz Israel or serve in the Employment Company (Military) in Australia, were eventually released from internment, many of them were suddenly faced with problems which had not existed for them to four to six years. These were psychological, mental and social. Some of the ex-internees, so long as they were in a camp, even before World War II broke out, were looked after by the welfare organizations in England. They had a roof over their heads, meals prepared for them, clothing to wear, even medical assistance when such was required.

Even on the *Dunera,* where the inmates were robbed of everything they had, whether clothing, papers, valuables, or family photographs, they were still given something to eat, a corner or a bench to lie down on, the clothing they had on when embarked on the ship. Then in the camps at Hay and Tatura, where conditions changed for the better, in food and in social relations, and hopes increased for release sooner or later, they had nearly everything provided for them, irrespective of how meagre it was at times.

Suddenly, however, they were told to leave the internment camps. They found themselves on the other side of the fence and they faced the questions: where shall I go? what shall I do? where and what shall I eat? and many other questions connected with the everyday life of a human being. Some of the ex-internees, fortunately not many, became so mentally deranged or simply insane, that they had to be certified for admittance into asylums. Others were treated in psychiatric and mental institutions, whilst a certain number were free to live wherever they wished but, from time to time, they had to undergo examinations by psychiatrists and other doctors.

Fortunately, by that time, the attitude of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society to the internees had changed very much for the better. The Society paid many of the expenses connected with the

healing of the men and was successful, at times, in finding suitable employment for many.

But at times, however, some of the ex-internees who were not mentally stable did things which involved them with police action. They were arrested, had to be bailed out and when their cases came up for hearing, solicitors and barristers had to be engaged to act on their behalf. With some minor exceptions, I was frustrated and, on occasions, very much distressed, when nearly every Jewish lawyer I approached with a plea to appear on behalf of the afflicted men, demanded either that the honorarium be paid in advance or a personal guarantee from me that it would be paid later.

At all times, such cases came up suddenly and had to be attended to without delay. Quite often I had to collect monies for such purposes from private people and, in order to speed up the collections, I had to enlist the help of people like Rabbi H. Sanger, who usually passed on the actual enactment of the collections to Rabbi Asher. So too did S. J. Slutzkin, Leo Fink, Bernard Cowen and others. Speedy actions by individuals had to be taken in view of the fact that any welfare, philanthropic or relief society could not pay larger amounts without the sanction of their respective committees which met only once a month. Even then, in some cases, only half the required amounts were paid. As for the balance, they said: 'You have to collect it yourself'.

Thus the wrongful internment of one distinct group of Britain's wartime refugee aliens, the *Dunera* passengers, went on to internment at Hay and Tatura in Australia, and finally came to an end. Most internees joined the Australian Army, whether the best-known Eighth Employment Company or other employment companies, the AIF, Military Intelligence or the entertainment troops. Some migrated to Eretz Israel. Others were released into civilian jobs 'on parole', and others worked in industry. Most eventually took the opportunity of Australian citizenship offered by the then Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, and became absorbed in Australian society.

A typical letter received from an internee in 1941, whilst at Camp in Tatura:

'The Secretary,
'Zionist Organisation,
'Melbourne.

'May I, a Zionist organized in the Theodor Herzl Society, London (affiliated to the Zionist Organisation of Great Br.), approach you in the following matter.
'We are here in this Camp many Jews and further Jews arrived today.

We are all refugees, and we have already received the visit of the Jewish Welfare Society. But as there are Zionists among us (i.e. Mr Schindler, nephew of Mr Schindler of the former German Pro-Palestine Committee, Mr Frenkel from Vienna, a leader in the Youth Movement), we are very much interested to receive not only prayer-books, but also books about Zionism in German, Hebrew, English and French. Some of us would like to learn modern Hebrew, perhaps you have such books. Perhaps you could send us these books, if we cannot get them from the Welfare Society. If you send us newspapers, I should be prepared to make extracts, so that all of us can participate in the life of the Jewish world.

'Thanking you in anticipation I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
Kurt Hermann.
'PS Mr Frenkel would like to have a Hebrew Dictionary.'

A letter received from the same person four years later after the ex-internee was a free man in Eretz Israel, when World War II had ended and he was trying to make contact with survivors of the Holocaust:

'Dear Mr Patkin,

'It is rather a long time I have not written to you; as I have always lots of work. I doubt I would have done so now, if I had not heard yesterday, that among those saved at Bergen-Belsen are the wife and son of Mr Lissauer: the first list yesterday published contains the name of Mrs Lissauer (*nee* Horwitz) and son. I do not know Mr Lissauer's present address; therefore I send the good news to you, and I am confident you will communicate with him in this matter.

'A few weeks ago I met Rabbi Shenk from Sydney, who is now in London, and I discussed with him the fate of those still at T. I had a letter from Dr Jona, and I hope to see him, when and if he returns over this country to Australia.

'I had very good news from London; my brother in law, who had been a prisoner of war in Germany, returned to England.

'I am feeling quite well, though I should like to have a better position. I do not know if I have told you that I had a business of my own in former times, and I should like to be again independent. I hope that I shall be able to see my mother in a not too distant future; it is now more than five years that I left England, and 1000 good friends cannot replace a mother.

'I hope you will have half an hour spare-time to answer. Please let me know how you are and what you hear from the old friends. If you meet them give them my best and sincerest regards. Tell Mr Lissauer

or any other one, that I am always ready to help them if they want to settle anything here in Palestine.

Yours very sincerely,
Kurt Hermann.'

Following the publication in the monthly journal *Ivriah* about the plight of the internees at the internment camp and the appeal made in the same Journal by Mrs Ricke Cohen, the President of Wizo-Ivriah in Sydney, for clothing, books and other amenities for the inmates in the camps, substantial quantities of articles required were collected and, as the internees themselves stated, these were of great help to them.

Moreover, the internees said: 'It is not so much the material things that made us happier, but the way it was done. Mrs Cohen made us feel that somewhere outside the camp there are people who consider us their brothers and do not look upon us as aliens and, in particular, as "enemy aliens".'

Some so-called 'official' persons objected to Mrs Cohen's action and apparently succeeded in influencing the Editor of *The Australian Jewish Herald* to publish in its issue of the 26 June 1941, the following item by 'Hamabit':

'I referred some weeks ago to the fact that it was altogether undesirable that private people however well-meaning, should start making collections for the internees. As I pointed out, the position was obviously delicate and there was need for discriminating between those who were deserving of assistance and those who were not. I urged that only an official body, such as the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, working with the official sanction of the Commonwealth authorities, should deal with the matter. I therefore appealed to the community to refuse assistance to any private person who sought it.

'The purpose of this note is not to labour this point unnecessarily, but to pay tribute to the work of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in this regard. From my own knowledge, the Chaplain of the internees, Rabbi Danglow, and the officers of the Welfare Society, notably the Hon. Secretary, Miss Frances Barkman, enjoy more than the confidence of the military authorities. The community can rest satisfied that all that is necessary is being done. If there is anything else which is deemed desirable the community will be informed. The matter can be left at that.'

The Australian Jewish Herald in its issue of the 21 August 1941, published the following report, entitled 'Fine Spirit of Internees (send money to England or Eretz Israel)':

'The Australian Zionist Federation has established contact with a number of Zionist internees who are at Tatura, and has already obtained many requirements for them. In addition, the Federation has succeeded in obtaining certificates through the Jewish Agency, which in due course will enable a number of the internees to proceed to Eretz Israel.

'From one of the internees, Hans Herbert Hammerstein, Mr B. Patkin, Secretary of the Federation, has received a warm letter of thanks for all that has been done to date. "I want to thank you very much for the fruit, sweets and other nice things you brought with you." Mr Hammerstein writes. "But if you will allow me to say so, we would prefer that if any money from Jewish people is available, that it should go to Eretz Israel and England, and conscious of the fact, we feel rather uneasy at getting presents. If we can do nothing actively, then we do not want to diminish the Jewish effort. The only exception is our educational work, necessary for the future of our people and so we shall not be ashamed to accept large quantities you can spare of Jewish books in any language, papers, Hebrew exercise books and so on.

'"Since your visit," Mr Hammerstein goes on, "Jewish activity in this camp has grown. We had a Zionist conference with an appeal to learn Hebrew. I hold a lecture each Saturday on Jewish problems and notable Jewish figures. We had a Herzl-Bailik commemoration on 20 Tammuz and we are planning for a public lecture on Eretz Israel soon, to be held in the camp school. We send our grateful thanks for all you are doing."'

Nearly two years later I received the following letter from my friend Hans Hammerstein, and with this I wish to conclude this book.

'Dear Mr Patkin,

'Though I wrote nothing to you, you have been all the months in the hearts and your name on the lips of all of us who have had the good luck to reach finally this our country. We told and wrote of you, and as to myself, I hold some lectures, in various places, on our voyage around the world, and each time I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak of you. I need not add (because I am sure you know it already) that I spoke also at Nathania, where I made a visit to your parents first, at evening, not only I but all German Jews of Nathania had great pleasure to see the Patkins in their midst, listening to my speech. (I must confess that my Hebrew is still as bad as my English and I am able only to speak in German.) I am very sorry that I was not able to answer the questions of your father concerning

your private life, knowing you only as a "representative". *However we are thankful that the only official Zionist representative we ever saw in Camp was you!* We shall never forget the fine manner that you used when dealing with us. We felt that in your view we were no beggars and no "enemies" and no "aliens" but *Haverim*; it made us proud somehow that unlike some other Jews the Zionist did not disappoint us.

'The return voyage was, in spite of all inconvenient details, as beautiful as a dream, and it is impossible to explain our feelings of those days and nights. We sat on deck chairs, the southern waters gliding away under the ship and the southern sky with its cross remaining behind, and we felt that we came nearer and nearer to Eretz Israel. Ship and men and officers likewise excellent, and we were not a bit nervous but full of confidence that we would reach our country of destination. This voyage was all the contrary of the first one.

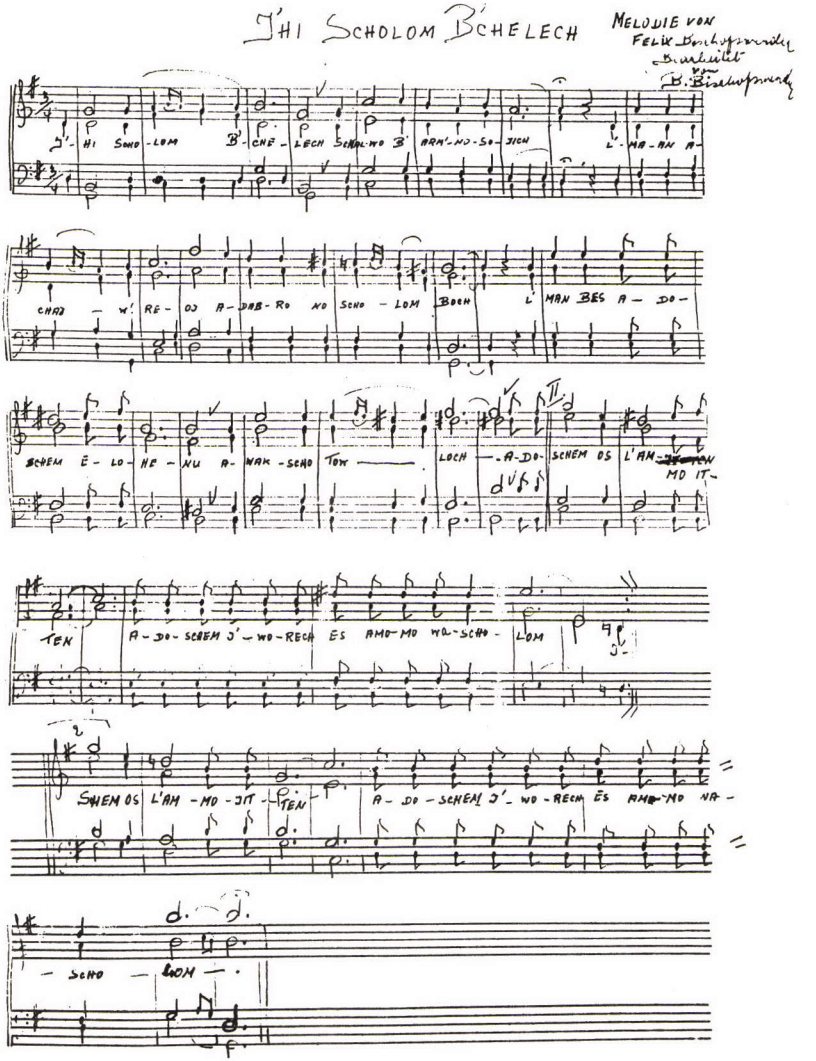
'My friends found good, or rather good, jobs very soon. As to myself, I joined the Palestine Forces as you see from my address. How glad I am that I did not give in in the War of Nerves.

'Again and again we refused to join any other unit, it was all in vain that Major Layton informed us highly officially that for the duration of the war there would never be a passage to Palestine, never be certificates, never be Jewish Units! Things changed, but our conviction didn't.

'Now keep well, dear Mr Patkin. I hope you will not forget my friends over there who have done nothing worse than I did. Their only crime is that they left Hitler-Germany with a legal British visa and in the hope that they would find freedom in England. Any time when I see barbed wire, I can't help thinking on those my unlucky comrades whose years—now the third one—still pass unlived!

Ever yours,
H. H. Hammerstein.'

Appendix


J'HI SCHOLOM B'CHELECH
MELODIE VON
FELIX
B. Wiesenfeld
J'-HI SCHO-LOM B'-CHE-LECH SCHAL-WO B' ARA'-WO-SO-JICH L'-MA-AN A-
CHAD — W'-RE-OJ A-DAB-RO NO SCHO-LOM BOEH L'MAN BES A-DO-
SCHEM E-LO-HE-NU A-WAR-SCHO TOW LOCH — A-DO-SCHEM OS L'AM-
MO IT-
TEN A-DO-SCHEM J'-WO-RECH ES AMO-MO WA-SCHO-LOM
SWEM OS L'AM-MO-JIT-TEN A-DO-SCHEM J'-WO-RECH ES AMO-MO NA-
SCHO — LOM —

Melody by Felix Bischofswerder, arranged by Boaz Bischofswerder.
Psalm 122:
7. May there be peace inside your walls and safety in your palaces.
8. For the sake of my brothers and friends I say to Jerusalem, 'Peace be with you'.
9. For the sake of the house of God I pray for your prosperity.
Psalm 29:
11. The Lord gives strength to his people and blesses them with peace.

Index

Aachen, 2
Abrahams, A., 29
Adam, Dr, 53, 116
Adolf Wehrman, 12, 18, 20-1
Africa, 40, 46, 48, 53, 72, 123, 131, 133
Agudat Yisrael, 133
Albury, 168
Alexandria, 148
America, xv, 1, 6, 8, 15-16, 29, 38, 48, 51, 66, 72, 74, 87, 94, 97, 101, 110, 115, 133, 137, 144, 151, 160, 163, 170
Amsterdam, 104
Anderson, Sir John, 61, 108
Arandora Star, 20-2, 26, 37-8, 42, 44-6, 63, 137
Argentina, 1
Asher, Rabbi J., 172
Athens, 135
Auerbach, 65
Augsburg, 110
Auschwitz, 6, 99
Australia, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, 19, 24, 27, 29-31, 40, 42, 48, 52, 54-5, 57-9, 61-9, 72-3, 75-7, 79-80, 82-4, 88, 90, 94-9, 101-5, 107-10, 113, 116, 118-20, 122-4, 126-7, 129-32, 135, 137-41, 143-6, 148, 150-9, 161-3, 168-71, 173
Australian Jewish Forum, 69
Australian Jewish Herald, 174
Australian Jewish News, 137
Australian Jewish Welfare Society, xii, xiii, 84, 97, 99, 110, 123, 137, 157, 159, 164, 171-2, 174
Australian Yiddishe Nays, 122
Austria, 1, 5, 11-12, 18-20, 65, 76-8, 126, 133, 150-1

Bachrach, Hershl, 46
Baeck, Rabbi Dr Leo, 1
Ballet Jooss, 52
Barkman, Frances, 174
Bar-Nir Aaron, *see* Bruner, Alfred
Bavaria, 6
BBC, 15, 18, 131
Becker, 102-3
Behrend, Dr Felix, 76
Belgium, 2, 7-8, 12, 15, 17
Ben-Gurion, David, 160
Ben-Shemen, 149
Bentwich, Professor Norman, 15, 132
Bergen-Belsen, 173
Berger, Sigmond, 81
Berlin, xiv, 2-4, 9-10, 14, 22, 37-8, 46, 53, 65, 75, 77, 83, 92, 99, 154
Berliner Tageblatt, 3
Beth-Zerah, 103-4, 149
Bialick, Hayim Nakhman, 67, 122, 175
Bischofswerder, Boaz, 46, 75
Blau-Weiss, 10
Blumenthal, Rabbi Dr Elhanan, 122-4
B'nai B'rith, 6, 179
Boas, I. H., 124
Bock, Heinz, 3-5, 12, 83-6, 91, 121-2, 134, 136, 170
Bock, Mrs G., 4
Bombay, 63, 94, 166
Bonn, 10, 99
Boomerang, 70, 94, 106
Brand, Walter, 97, 157, 159, 164, 168
Braun, Pinhas, 44, 139
Brazil, 48, 100
Breslau, xiv, 1, 154
Breuer, Jacob, 160
Broadmeadows, 120, 165-7
Brodetzky, Professor Selig, 15
Broughton, Captain E. R., 98, 137-8
Bruch, Max, 73, 138
Bruner, Alfred (Bar-Nir-Aaron), 5-6, 64, 87, 124, 150-3
Buchenwald Concentration Camp, 1, 11, 131

Calwell, Arthur, 146
Canada, 6-7, 19-22, 27-9, 38, 52, 61, 65, 108, 137
Canterbury, Archbishop of, 13, 101
Cape Town, 46, 56-7, 123

Carroll, Father J., 81, 106
Cazalet, Major Victor, 100
Cecil, Viscount, 101
Chelsea Transition Centre, 18
Chichester, Archbishop of, 101
Christians, xiv, 9, 13, 18-19, 53, 65, 74, 80-5, 87, 90, 92, 98, 112
Churchill, Winston, 18, 134
Clerque, S. C., 44
Cohen, 125-6
Cohen, Mrs Ricki, 103, 159, 173-4
Cologne, 2
Communists, 18, 24, 26, 92
Creech-Jones, 30
Curacao, 52
Czechoslovakia, 1, 61, 65, 77

Dachau, 11, 49, 81
Danglow, Rabbi J., 88, 114, 157-9, 174
David, Rabbi, 82
Denmark, 17
Derna, 134
Devonshire, 18
di Lasso, Orlando, 75
Duffy, Judge Charles Gavan, 141-2
Duisburg, 122
Duncan, Catherine, 138
Dunera Statement, 26-7, 32-6, 38, 63, 95, 104
Dunkirk, 7, 22, 51-4
Dusseldorf, 134

Egon, 75
Egypt, 104, 147-8, 150, 152
Ehrentrau, Rabbi Dr J. E., 30, 52, 88, 90, 121, 124, 158
Eichenberg, Franz, 18, 27, 41, 53-5
Einstein, Albert, 101
El-Alamein, 134
Eliash, Mordekhai, 152
England, xiii, xv, xvi, 1-2, 4-6, 8-9, 11-12, 14-16, 18-19, 22-8, 30-1, 35-8, 41, 44, 51-2, 54, 57-61, 65-9, 72-3, 75-81, 83, 87, 90, 93-6, 98, 100-11, 113-22, 124, 126-32, 134-7, 139-48, 150-2, 158-9, 161-2, 171, 173-4, 176
Eppenstein, 70
Epstein, Dr Kurt, 147
Eretz Israel, xii-xv, 1-8, 10, 13-16, 19, 23, 25, 48, 64, 66, 78, 86-7, 92-3, 96-7, 99, 101, 103, 116, 118, 120, 124, 127, 130-7, 148, 150-2, 154-60, 162-71, 173-5
Evian Conference, 109

Fabian, Erwin, 138
Falk, Rabbi L. A., 88, 157, 168
Fascism, 17, 19, 58, 108, 110
Feiglin, Moshe, 96, 120-1, 124, 130
Feuchtwanger, Rabbi Dr, 147-8
Fink, Leo, 124-7
Fischer, Kurt, 1, 12-13, 17, 23, 26, 35, 42, 50, 56, 64, 68, 98, 104, 116, 118, 120, 129
Forde, Frank, 146
Fox, Bishop, 82
France, 8, 15, 24, 51, 61, 73, 148, 151
Franco, General Francisco, 74
Frank, Dr, 129
Frank, Emil, 122, 136
Frankfurt, xiv, 43, 154
Freedman, Rabbi Dr H., 121, 124
Freetown, 54
Freilich, Max, 159
Frenkel, Erwin, 12, 18-20, 45, 63, 113, 172-3
Freyman, Professor, 25
Fripps, Major, 129, 136

Gateshead, 6
Gaza, 152
Gedera, 152
Geneva, 19, 96
Germany, xiii, 1-11, 13-16, 18-26, 28, 36-7, 41-4, 46-8, 51, 54-6, 58, 63-4, 67, 69, 73-5, 77-80, 83, 87, 90-1, 93, 96, 98-102, 112-13, 116, 118, 122, 126, 129, 131-5, 139-40, 143, 145, 149-51, 158, 163, 169-70, 173, 176
Gestapo, 1, 5, 20
Gilroy, Cardinal, 82
Ginsburg, Yoseph, 161
Goldman, Professor M. D., xiv, 154
Goldsmith, xii, xiii
Goode, Percy, 165
Goossens, Sir Eugene, 60
Gordoniya, 20
Gruen, Professor Fred H., 75
Grynszpan, Hershel, 11
Gurewicz, Rabbi J. L., 121, 123, 124
Gutmann, 45

Haifa, 135, 151
Hamburg, xiv, 52, 154, 169
Hammerstein, Hans (Shiloni, Israel), 9-14, 16-17, 36, 41, 43, 52, 58, 63, 66-7, 69, 72, 80, 83-4, 90, 92, 114, 116-17, 121, 129, 131, 136, 146, 149, 163-4, 174-5
Handel, George Frederik, 60, 75
Haser, 79
Hashomer Hatzayir, 10, 20
Hay Camp, xiii, xv, 38, 62-3, 65-8, 70, 74-83, 94, 96, 103-7, 112-13, 116, 122, 124, 126-8, 138, 159, 160, 165, 170-1

Hehalutz, 78, 92, 93, 96
Hehir, Fr Noel, S.J., 82
Heine, Walter, 52
Hermann, Kurt, 173
Herstall, 2
Herzl, Theodor, 14, 25, 83, 93, 99, 172, 175
Hess, Yaakov, 117, 118
Hevrah-Kadisha, 104
Hirsch, 19, 98
Hitler, Adolf, 1, 17, 22, 93, 100-1, 101, 131, 134, 137, 156-7, 159, 176
Hochberger, 138
Hoffmann, Dr Robert, 116
Holderlin, Johann Friedrich, 42
Holland, 4-5, 8, 12, 15, 17, 52, 135, 150-1
Huyton, 26-9, 32, 34, 38, 128

India, 65, 131
Ireland, 24, 27-8
Isaacs, Gerald Rufus (Second Marquis of Reading), 2, 15, 18
Isle of Man, 24-6, 28, 67, 135
Ismailiah, 152
Italy, 20, 33, 37, 41, 46, 58, 63-4, 74-5, 112, 119
Ivriah, 173

Japan, 72, 129, 147
Jerusalem, xv, 15, 17, 115, 123, 155-6, 170-1
Jews, xii, 1-4, 6, 10-11, 13-14, 18-20, 22, 24-5, 30-1, 42-3, 46, 51-4, 58, 64-6, 74, 77, 80, 83-8, 90-2, 94, 96-7, 103-4, 107, 112-14, 120-4, 131-5, 137-40, 149, 151, 154, 158-9, 161, 164, 168, 170-2, 174-5
Jewish Agency, xiv-xv, 131, 148, 154-7, 159, 169, 174
Jewish Legion, 15-16, 132, 148, 176
Jewish Standard, 29
Jona, Dr J. Leon, xii, xiv, 124, 154-5, 157, 173
Jordan, Sir Frederick, 141
Joseph, Asher, 51, 68, 96, 97
Joseph, Dr Bernard (Dov Yoseph), 160
Josten, Brother, 65
Jotkowitz, Miss Susi, 99
Judishes Gemeindeblatt, 5
Juedishe Rundshau, 3
Justice and Humanity, 107, 111

Kahn, Robert, 6, 43, 58, 79, 95, 125, 128
Kalb, Cantor, 113-14
Kallay, 19
Kaminsky, 19, 46
Kaplan, 14
Karberg, Dr, 93
Karnenu, 17
Kefar Hanassi, 122
Kefar Mordekhay, 152
Keren Hayesod, xiv, 154, 169, 170
Keren Kayemeth Le 'Israel, xii, xiv, 16-17, 93, 133, 154
King James Leopold (Kohn, Leopold), 128
Kitchener Camp, xv, 5, 8-9, 12-13, 15, 17, 23-4, 28, 58, 67, 77, 115, 132-3, 135
Kittell, 46
König, Father Walter, S.J., 37, 52, 65, 73, 80, 105, 112
Krystal Nacht, 5, 6, 11, 50
Kyte, Reverend, 126-7

Labour Employment Company, xvi, 13, 15-16, 18, 25, 44, 97-8, 101, 108-9, 113, 115, 124, 127-30, 137-40, 142-3, 145-6, 171
Lafitte, Francois, 61, 100
Lamm, Erwin, 66, 87, 97
Laqueur, Rudy, 73
Lauterbach, L., 155
Layton, Major Julian, 95, 104-7, 109, 115, 127, 130-2, 141-2, 145, 155-61, 163-6, 168, 176
Lebanon, 104, 149
Levin, Leonhard, 12, 165, 166
Levy, 148
Levinsky, Max, 73
Liebknecht, Karl, 46
Liffman, Eric, 73
Lingfield, 37
Linton, J., 157
Lissauer, M. I., 88, 173
Liverpool (England), 20-1, 23, 27-9, 32, 34, 36, 43, 56, 61, 67, 108, 128
Liverpool (NSW), 168
Loder, Syd, 73
Loebenstein, Elhanan, 52, 87-8, 120, 124
Loewald, Klaus G., 69, 73
Lomas, Shalom, 14, 91-2, 116, 149
London, 7, 12, 14, 17, 24, 31, 75, 96, 98, 100, 115, 121, 142, 157, 172, 173
Lourie, Arthur, 157
Loveday, 118
Lowe, Dr, 117-18
Lowy, Dr Shlomo, xii, xiii, 154
Lully, 75

Maccabeans (Maccabi), 25, 97
Maddison, Lionel, 137, 164

Magen David Adom, xii
Manchester, 6
Mannix, Archbishop, 82
Margis, Hans Joachim, 22
Martin, Ray, 73, 98
Maschke, Dr Hermann, 12, 169-70
Masel, Alec, 124, 157, 161
Meagher, Fr John, 82
Meier, Bert Irving (Myer, Bim), 43, 73, 138
Meir Ben Isaac Nehorai, Rabbi, 60
Melbourne, xiii, 18, 33, 58, 63, 73-4, 76, 79, 81-2, 95-9, 105, 107, 112-15, 119-20, 123, 131, 138-9, 159, 167-70
Menzies, Robert, 31
Merschweld, Professor Ludwig, 73
Meyer, Dr, 63, 129
Meyer, Alexian Brother, 65
Meyer, Professor, 65, 81
Michaelis, 25
Mildura, 112
Mizrahi, 20
Morini, Professor, 20
Morrison, Herbert, 61, 108
Moschkowsky, 22, 23
Moses (a farmer), 116
Mufti of Jerusalem, 1
Munich, 52, 90
Murray Bridge, 112, 118, 119, 138
Murray, Gilbert, 101
Murrumbidgee River, 68, 112
Myer Emporium Ltd (Melbourne), 165

Nahariyah, 104, 149
Nataniyah, 175
Natanson, Hans, 141-2
Navon, Mordekhay and Zipporah, 166
Nazis, xiii, xiv, xv, 1, 5-6, 8, 10-13, 17, 19-22, 24-5, 27-9, 36, 38, 41, 45-6, 51, 56, 58, 61, 64-5, 67, 74-5, 77, 83, 90, 92-3, 96, 99-101, 103-4, 107-11, 113, 118, 125-6, 129, 131, 133-4, 139, 144, 150, 154, 158-9, 169
Neier, Wolf, 9, 14
Neue Freie Presse, 93
Newman, Leo and Max, 121
Newton, Bill, 161
New York, 38, 96
Northampton, 6
Norway, 8

Onchan Camp, 20
Oneg Shabbat, 86
Orange (NSW), 105, 106
Ostend, 2, 23
Oxford, 41, 75

Pagett, Wickham, 101
Palestine, 10, 30, 99, 134, 144, 156-7, 176
Pamico, Apostolic Delegate, 82
Paris, 11, 24, 28
Patkin, Hemda, 166, 169
Peake, 108
Phillip, Captain, 95
Pioneer Corps, *see* Labour Employment Co.
Podbelsky, 45
Poland, 3-4, 8, 10-11, 17
Port Melbourne, 165, 167
Port Phillip, 147
Port Said, 147, 151, 167, 170
Porush, Mrs B., 6, 79
Porush, Rabbi Dr I., 6, 79, 124
Posener, 85
Pushkin, Alexander, 58

Quakers, 81

Rabbenu Tam, 47
Rabinovitch, A. J., 123
Ramsay, 24, 28
Rath, Ernst, 11
Red Cross, xii, 99
Refugees (Jewish), 1, 11-13, 31
Reimand, Dr Bois, 81
Renmark, 118-19
Rhine, 22, 37
Rialto House, xii
Rittermann, 73
Rosen, Felix, 14
Rosenblueth, Martin (Felix), 14
Rothfels, Dr H., 103
Rotterdam, 135
Russia, 3, 4, 8, 73-4, 93

Sachsenhausen (Concentration Camp), 11, 24
Sandwich, 9, 12, 23, 101
Sanger, Rabbi Dr Hermann, 172
Saul, Walter, 81
Schiff, Max, 134, 135
Schindler, 172
Schenk, Rabbi Max, 173
Schiamovitch, 21
Schnorer, 99, 103
Scotland, 21, 118
Scout Movement, 10, 120
Seaton, Ernest and Hermann, *see* Zutrauen
Seaton Camp, 18-20, 46
Shaffer, Rabbi Shaul, 88, 121
Shakespeare, 25
Shanghai, 5
Shepparton, 63, 96, 112, 120-1, 126, 130, 138
Sheridan, Miss Margot, 169

Shertok, Moshe (Sharet, Moshe), xiv, 15, 154-5
Shiloni, Israel, *see* Hammerstein, Hans
Shiloni, Miriam, 149
Shiloni, Talma, 149
Shiloni, Zvi, 149
Simon, Bruno, 55
Sinai, 64
Singapore, 112, 113
Slutzkin, S. J., 172
Solum, 134
Spain, 73, 104
Spender, Percy, 107
Stadlen, Peter, 26, 75
Stalingrad, 59
Stampfl, Franz, 77, 79
Stanley, Eugene, xii
Stein, Professor, 129
Stern, Armin (Stern, Manfred), 79
Sternberg, Dr Kurt, 73, 138
Stettin, 11, 17, 99, 134-5
Stockholm, 74
Stokes, Fr, 82, 106
Suez, 131, 134, 147, 151-2
Sulzberger, 43
Switzerland, 22, 35, 96, 99-100
Sydney, 58, 61, 66, 68, 72-4, 79, 81-2, 94-6, 103-4, 110, 123, 159-60, 167-9, 173
Sydney Symphony Orchestra, 60

Tackaberry, W. T., 140
Talbot, Henry, 64
Tait, Leo (Tisch, Leo), 26
Tatura, xiii, xv, 63, 69, 78-9, 95-6, 105-7, 110, 112-14, 117-29, 134, 137, 140, 142, 155, 160-1, 165-72, 174
Tchernichowsky, Shaul, 92
Tel-Aviv, 132, 135, 148-9, 152
Tenenhaus, 14
Times (London), 31
Tobruk, 134
Tocumwal, 138
Traub, Dr Michael, 169, 170
Trieste, 22
Trumpeldor, Yoseph, 25

Ullmann, Professor, 53, 81
Urbach, Dr, 146-8
Ussishkin, Menahem, 25

Vienna, xiv, 20, 65, 77, 82, 93, 114, 116, 121, 128, 138, 154, 172
Ville D'Amiens, 151
Vladivostok, 74

Warners Holiday Camp, 18, 20
Wedgewood, Colonel Josiah, 37
Weipawa, 130
Weiss, 56
Wells, H. G., 100
Werder, Felix (Bischofswerder, Felix), 58, 75, 113
Wesel, 135
Wieder, 14
Wierner, Dr, 65
Wittenberg, Emil, 73
Wizo-Ivriah, 103, 160, 173
Wolfsohn, David, 99
Wolfsohn, Professor Hugo, 50, 75
Wolkenstein, Count, 65, 82
World Zionist Organisation, 14-15, 93, 99, 115, 155

Yehudah Ha-Nassi, Rabbi, 90
Yeshivah, 6, 89, 121

Ziesse, Dr Stephen, 81
Zimmels, Rabbi Dr H. S., 121
Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, xii-xv, 96, 115, 137, 151, 154-6, 161, 172, 174
Zionist Federation of Britain, 17, 172
Zionist Review, 17
Zionism, xiii-xv, 3, 5, 11, 13-16, 19-20, 24-5, 76, 83, 86-7, 91-3, 96, 115-16, 121, 132-4, 136, 154, 158, 161-3, 165, 169-70, 172, 175
Zitzewitz Herr von, 41, 58, 134
Zulehner, 75
Zutrauen, Ernst, 37, 38
Zutrauen, Hermann, 37, 38



Benzion Patkin was born in Russia in 1902. He became involved in public affairs at the age of 15 and since then has been actively associated with many national, communal and sporting organizations in Russia, Eretz Israel and Australia.

His involvement with the *Dunera* internees dates back to 1941, when he first heard of their plight and, as Honorary Secretary of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, began working for their release.

As well, Benzion Patkin has been founder, co-founder or initiator of a number of institutions and movements including Mount Scopus College.

He has been the Australian correspondent of the Tel-Aviv newspaper *Haboker* (1946-9), contributor to Australian and overseas Jewish periodicals, and has occupied executive positions in numerous organizations — the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, the Brit Ivrit Olamit (World Hebrew Speaking Union), the United Nations Association of Victoria, the International Club of Victoria, the Jewish National Library 'Kadimah', the Magen David Adom (the equivalent of the Red Cross Society) and many others.

He is also the author of *Heritage and Tradition*, on the development of the Jewish community in Australia with the emphasis on Jewish education.



ISBN 0 7269 6803 X